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Angels in the Anglican tradition (1547-1662)

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ANGELS
IN
THE ANGLICAN TRADITION
(1547-1662)

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ABSTRACT

By the Reformation, Catholic angelology, through Patristic and scholastic influence, had become a highly developed system of hierarchies, mediation, and cultus, which would be rejected by the reformers. Luther saw an understanding of angels as second only to that of Christ and God. Conversely, Calvin, saw the study of angels as inherently damaging to faith. Angelology could do nothing but lead one away from Christ, and even if it didn't, it was a superfluous subject, fit only for the refutation of heretics.

The Prayer Books of 1549 and 1552 well show the move from Lutheran to a Continental Calvinist theology in Cranmer. From 1560 through to the 1590s, Calvinist-influenced Anglican writers dealt predominantly with refutation of Rome and angelology was a subject to be condemned. Bullinger, however, favoured a positive approach to the subject, and influenced Anglican writers such as Jewel, and later Hooker. By 1590s thought could move beyond defence. Perkins' *Golden Chain* gave a classically minimalist Calvinist line, whereas Richard Hooker espoused an angelology which saw angels as self-evidently existing, and he integrated them heavily into both cosmology and ecclesiology, and thus demanded men understood them.

Under James I (who employed an angelologist who advocated a heavily mediaeval view), angelology flourished. Lancelot Andrewes, whose career had begun in the 1580s with a minimalist angelology, by the time of his death in 1625 was displaying numerous mediaeval and Patristic influences. John Donne, while retaining caution, posited a speculative and Patristic view, and William Forbes broke the great Protestant taboo and

advocated prayer for the mediation of angels. Against this, both Calvinism and rationalism advocated minimalist lines. In the 1640s Hobbes' rationalism reduced angels to irrational creations of the mind, or phantasms from God, while Calvinism continued to give angelology as minor a role as possible - the Westminster Confession (1645) classically demonstrating that. Yet in this period Jeremy Taylor, in contrast, posited an angelology that, in parts, went further even than Donne in accepting mediaeval and Patristic influences.

The only full exposition in the 1650s was by Bishop Joseph Hall. It is characterised by a struggle to balance his Calvinism with his broad Patristic and mediaeval reading, and the challenges of rationalism – his answer being an ever increasing move to seeing angels as working invisibly, understandable only from within the context of a regenerate and spiritual mind. From 1660 onward angelology was a subject of ever decreasing importance since the existence of angels could not be scientifically demonstrated, thus signalling the effective end of angelology as a valid subject for Christian theology and making Hall's the last Anglican exposition of the 17th century created from a truly mediaeval cosmology.

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Introduction

The period of 1547 to 1662 was a foundational and formational time for the Anglican Church. Under Henry, a reformed and Rome-less Catholicism developed, but on Edward's accession (1547), initial Lutheran influences moved in an increasingly Calvinist direction as the exiles returned – a move demonstrated by the differences between the 1549 and 1552 Prayer Books. During Elizabeth's reign (1559-1603) the struggle between Puritans and conformists grew, and then continued throughout the reigns of James I (1603-25) and Charles I (1625-49). Generally, the Puritans were Calvinist, favouring Presbyterian church government, and the conformists were Episcopalians who were increasingly influenced by the Patristic revival of the late 16th century. From 1600, the English Church became increasingly distinctive, steering a course between Rome, Calvinism and Arminianism, and the angelology of this time often highlights this idiosyncrasy. This, then, is basic flow of thought through this period, and what this thesis is examining is how angelology fitted into, and was affected by, this milieu.

In terms of information, angelology is a subject notable for its fragmentary nature. Over the period, while much ink was spilt discussing almost every other area of theology, the major writers who touch on the subject are few and far between. Once we move past what may be called the foundational document of this study, the 1549 Prayer Book, over the next 115 years, which includes the so-called *Golden Age of English Angelology* in James I's reign, there are only four systematic studies in angelology. William Perkins and Richard Hooker in the 1590s, William Forbes in 1625, and Joseph Hall in 1651. Scattered between are writers who engaged in the

subject from within other contexts, notably John Donne, James Ussher and Richard Sibbes in the 1620s, and John Bramhall and Jeremy Taylor in the 1640s. Otherwise, evidence is fragmentary, especially from 1550 to 1590, and in places a synoptic approach has been taken since all that exists is passing comments in other contexts.

Despite the paucity of information, lines of development can be clearly identified, as can uniqueness and idiosyncrasy of approach. Initially, the main influence on the English Church was Luther, and his attitude towards angels was a positive one, which, while modifying and reforming mediaeval Catholic angelology, demanded that men's first thought must be towards God and Christ, and the second must be towards the angelic realm, and the *care of angels*. For Luther, an understanding of angels was important in order to understand the world in which men lived, and we can see this in the 1549 Prayer Book. However, as the influence of Continental Reformed thought (exemplified by Calvin) grew, so a Calvinist attitude toward angelology gained increasing credence. Two thoughts shaped Calvin's angelology – first, that angelology could do nothing else but lead one away from Christ, and so destroy one's faith; second, even if this wasn't the case, angels were essentially superfluous to a proper understanding of God and Christ. To this end Calvin called Christians to be in *willing ignorance* of angels – except when an understanding of angels could be used to confute Catholics and heretics.

From the 1550s a Calvinist style approach was dominant, but in contrast to this, Bullinger took a different line. For Bullinger, the fact that God had regularly, positively, and consistently talked of angels and their ministry toward man in the

Bible, meant that God wanted men to have an understanding of angels and their work. Therefore, it was a *foul fault* if one had no knowledge of angels.

These two approaches are identifiable throughout the Elizabethan period – initially angels were little more than a theological tool in order to fight Rome, but as Bullinger's influence grew, a greater willingness to engage in the subject and the history and traditions around them emerged. This, along with a growing revival in Patristic theology, led to the first two attempts at an Anglican angelology in the 1590s, and the contrast between the two could not be more striking. The Bezarian Calvinist William Perkins' approach is brief and functional, with angels divorced from the rest of his thought and theology, and from the Church and mankind in general. Hooker, on the other hand, integrated them in a fundamental manner into his whole thought, cosmology, and methodology, and made them an essential part of his ecclesiology and view of providence, saying that *the laws of angels we cannot judge altogether impertinent unto the affairs of the church*.

When James I came to the throne in 1603, many Puritans expected him to endorse a move towards a much more continental and Calvinist model for the Church of England, yet he surprised them all by remaining loyal to the episcopacy and the existing state of affairs, while endorsing an increasingly strident apologetic against Rome. He was a surprise to many in his interest in all things theological, which included him writing a number of books and treatises (including one on demons). This interest appears to have included angels, since he employed an official court angelologist, the Jesuit trained John Salkeld – who published *An Treatise Of Angels* in 1613 dedicated to James. From within the English Church, it is only Lancelot

Andrewes during the period 1600-1620 who wrote about angels to any significant degree, and his line was much more in tune with Hooker, and other mediaeval and Patristic influences.

In the 1620s, as Laud's influence grew, Calvinists started to leave the Church of England, allowing a greater place for the Patristic/High Church party. Writers like John Donne started to use whole sections of sermons to investigate angels, and the influence from his Catholic past regularly showed through, as he demonstrated an affinity towards a more Hookerian vision of integrating angels into his whole world-view. Richard Sibbes was also taken up by the renewed interest in angels, and strove to find a positive place for them from within a Calvinist framework. In contrast, William Forbes posited the most extreme deviation from classical 16th century Protestant angelologies, when in 1625 he wrote, but did not publish, a treatise that advocated, defined, and then defended the invocation of angels as ones who pray for and intercede for men, and he supported this position using authorities as diverse as Patristic and Scholastic thinkers, contemporary Catholic apologists, and even the Calvinist Archbishop of Armagh, James Ussher!

During the 1630s and 1640s, other considerations and battles came to the fore and angelology again became an issue of lesser importance, but nevertheless it was discussed. For example, John Bramhall challenged the rationalist Thomas Hobbes' assertion that angels were nothing but images and fantasies (a early form of demythologisation), and thus did not exist. However, it is worth noting that even Hobbes, after systematically undermining and rejecting Scripture's witness to their existence, eventually admitted angels did exist, simply because Christ said they did.

Again, Jeremy Taylor, in the 1640s posited a heavily Patristic angelology that seemed to have little regard for either Calvinism or rationalism, and used them as a defence of the episcopacy.

In 1651 came the last great Anglican exposition on angels in our period, by Bishop Joseph Hall, and it is clear that he is trying to steer a course between three great thought systems – Calvinism, Catholicism and an ever-growing rationalism.

Direction of Thesis.

The thesis is constructed along historical lines, which allows the strands of thought to be discerned. As debates rose and subsided inside and outside the Church of England, I will chart how angelology became a part of them, as well as how angelology directly reflected specific theological positions within the Church of England. The method will be largely description with analysis, since I recognise that angelology is not a commonly studied subject, but deals with unfamiliar texts, concepts and issues.

The thesis will start with the basic Biblical evidence, followed by how the Patristic and Mediaeval church developed this into a detailed and speculative area of theology. The impact of this 1500 years of thought on the English psyche will be described through popular literature, and the thought of the great English mystics, but mainly through the Sarum Missal and Primers of Henry VIII's reign – which sets the scene for Edward's accession in 1547. These initial chapters of background are not, and cannot be, comprehensive, but are solely shaped to allow access into the debates that arose in our period, as shall be explained in each of these chapters.

For the period from 1547 to the 1590s, I will use a two-pronged approach to aid clarity. First, I will describe how in Edward's and then Elizabeth's reign, official literature approached the subject, followed by how theologians (continental and English) expressed themselves. This will highlight the variation of approaches - a Lutheran or Bullingerist positivism, or a Calvinist detachment and distance, mixed with a willingness to engage in Patristic material, or an approach where *sola scriptura* is not compromised and Patristic sources not entertained.

In the 1590s, Hooker and Perkins provide the pivotal and paradigmatic comparison of approach, and it is here that the divergence of theology, methodology, approach and spirit is most clearly expressed – superfluity for Perkins, and centrality for Hooker. The section on the period 1600-1620 is based around James Arminius (as an important continental influence), John Salkeld, and Lancelot Andrewes, and it will show how a growing distance from Calvinism and reformation ideals was occurring in the period, and how this impacted on angelology. For the 1620s, the so-called *Golden Age of English Angelology*, the thesis will have a number of strands to it. First will be the more investigative attitude, as shown by Donne; second will be how the High Church group used angelology to press the Calvinists on predestination and other issues; and third will be how Calvinists responded to this, and tried to provide a positive angelology from within their theological systems. Last, I will examine Bishop Forbes' treatise on angelic intercession and mediation. This will be treated in a section on its own since it is such a unique document that has little in common with anything else written in the period.

As far as the period from 1630-50, the dominant theme for angelology was the growing influence of Enlightenment rationalism, with Lord Herbert's agnostic approach and Hobbes' early form of demythologisation. In the 1640s, when the English Civil War erupted, angelology became a part of the defence for the status quo. Finally, in the 1650s, comes Hall, and I will show how his angelology was squeezed by rationalism, Calvinism, and his own Patristic influences.

Chapter 1

Angelology in the Bible

Introduction.

As the Introduction indicated, this is not an attempt at a full Biblical exposition on angels. While it will give a broad over-view, it will focus much more on the verses and issues that would be contentious in our period. It will also not deal with modern critical and textual issues, since during the 16th/17th centuries these were not on the scholarly radar. In this pre-Enlightenment period the inspiration and accuracy of the Biblical texts went unquestioned. As Kummel notes:

The presupposition of the Reformation was that Scripture, explained by and of itself, is the sole and unambiguous medium of revelation. ... It had one, unambiguous meaning ... and could exhibit no contradictions. ... This view is the inevitable consequence of faith in scripture as the self-sufficient norm of belief. (Therefore) no really historical (critical) approach was possible.¹

What was debated was how one interpreted and applied the texts, not whether the texts in themselves were historically or culturally conditioned. Modern scholarship has questioned deeply the sources used to build the Bible's cosmology and understanding of angels. Bultmann thought that the angelology of the Bible and Early Church came *not from the philosophical tradition but from the mythological*

¹ W.G. Kummel *The New Testament: The History of the Investigation of its Problems* (London: SCM Press, 1973) p.26, 27, 29, 30, 31

tradition, and was not used to serve cosmological interests. ² In this light, he then saw that while the Biblical understanding of angels may *not have entirely lost what cosmological meaning they once had, (it) was nevertheless made to serve the history of salvation understanding of the relationship between God and the world.* ³ Ultimately, angels are mythological tool to aid men's understanding of God, and this idea has been reinforced by other thinkers too, such as Elaine Pagels who sees them (especially demons) as a tool to explain how the unexplained and disasters could happen in a universe created and ruled by God. ⁴

Even those thinkers who do not go as far as Bultmann and Pagels, have raised other issues, such as Eichrodt, who, while not rejecting the existence of angels, saw the Old Testament descriptions of the cherubim and seraphim as *painted with strongly mythological ideas.* ⁵ Also, the varying accounts of the Resurrection narratives regarding the angels, have been cited as showing developing traditions and ideas which cannot be taken as simple historical description. For example, and this is well noted by Marshall, there are differences between the Gospel accounts of the Resurrection, where Mark says that a man was present, Matthew says there was an angel, Luke says two angels that looked like men, and John says it was two angels. ⁶

² R. Bultmann *Theology of the New Testament (Vol. I & II)* (London: SCM Press, 1952), II p.146

³ Bultmann II p.147 c.f. II p.150

⁴ E. Pagels *The Origin Of Satan* (New York: Random House, 1995) p. xvi

⁵ W. Eichrodt *The Theology of the Old Testament (Vol. II)* (London: SCM Press, 1967) p.202

⁶ I. Marshall *The Gospel of Luke* (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1978) pp.882-3 c.f. Matt. 28:2; Mark 16:5; Luke 24:4; John 20:12

However, while all these are legitimate scholarly issues, Kummel's quote stands as defining the context by which the Reformers viewed the Bible. Modern historical and critical issues of today were not issues of the 16th and 17th century English Church, and for this reason will not be discussed here.

Finally, the following discussion of Biblical references is not exhaustive and is not intended to be. It is constructed with the specific intention of highlighting the issues that were raised by the 16th and 17th theologians, and the scriptural evidence upon which they would base their conclusions.

(1) The Old and New Testaments.

(A) Angelic Creation and Fall.

While it is clear that angels are created beings, made by God,⁷ regarding further issues, evidence is sparse. For example, when were angels created? Genesis 1:1 talks of the heavens and earth being created, but only the earth was formless and void, which could indicate that the heavens were not, and so angels had been created already. Alternatively, since angels are called beings of light, were they created as a part of *light*?⁸

Again, when did the angels fall? It is clearly before Satan tempted Eve in Genesis 3, but was after Genesis 1:4, or perhaps after 1:31, since at both these junctures God saw everything as *good*. Why did they fall? Isaiah 14:12-15 suggests that Lucifer wanted

⁷ Neh. 9:6 c.f. Ps 148:2-5; Col. 1:16

⁸ Gen. 1:3 c.f. Heb. 1:7; Ez. 1:13

to become like God. Yet it is also said there may have been jealousy that men were only lower than the angels for a while, later to be exalted above them via the Incarnation, and exalted to position where they would judge the angels – thus the demon’s hatred of both God and man.⁹

(B) Angelic Nature.

Angels are described as beings of light, fire, and wind (or spirit).¹⁰ They are spatially limited, so they cannot be in more than one place at one time,¹¹ and it is possible that a large number of angels or demons can inhabit a relatively small space.¹² Angels are intelligent, holy, obey the will of God,¹³ and are able to exercise moral judgement since some misused that faculty and sinned, and are now subject to judgement.¹⁴ The fact they are described as holy, by implication, says that they are without sin. However, the idea of them being sinless, raises questions when faced with a couple of enigmatic verses – Job 4:18 talks of angels being charged with folly (error), and Colossians 1:20 talks of angels needing reconciliation through Christ. How does one balance angels being sinless, yet with folly, and needing reconciliation with God? This again raises the question as to how holy and sinless beings could fall, and why those who didn’t fall now don’t, and those who fell now can’t be reconciled.

⁹ Heb. 2:7; I Cor. 6:3 c.f. Rev. 12:1-9

¹⁰ Ez. 1:13; Heb. 1:7; Matt. 28:3

¹¹ Dan. 10:13

¹² Lk. 8:30

¹³ Mt. 25:31; Job 5:1; Dan. 8:13; Ps. 103:20-21

¹⁴ II Ptr. 2:4; Jude 6; I Cor. 3:6

The nature of the angels is of important since men *will be like unto angels in the resurrection*.¹⁵ This state of being ἰσαγγελοι (*like the angels*) could be understood in terms of the angelic body, and/or morally, spiritually and intellectually, but it is not detailed. Angels in heaven do not have sensuous feeling as men do since they do not marry, but arguably do have gender and could, as fallen angels, engage in sexual intercourse.¹⁶ However, as previously mentioned, men will be exalted above the angels,¹⁷ which could also have implications for what is understood by men being ἰσαγγελοι.

Although angels are spirit beings, they appear to men in physical form. Men do not always see them, and sometimes need God to illuminate their minds in order to do so.¹⁸ They usually appear in human form (the main exception being when they appear as *living creatures*), and can be mistaken simply for other men.¹⁹ Their appearances can also come with a brilliant light or a glory, which could either be them reflecting the *glory of the Lord*, or it could be a glory or shining of their own being.²⁰

In contrast to all of this section, it needs to be noted that the Jewish group, the Sadducees rejected the existence of angels and all spiritual beings, so the Old Testament passages cited were not accepted by all to mean that an angelic spirit realm existed.²¹

¹⁵ Mt. 22:30

¹⁶ Mt. 22:30; Zech. 5:9; Gen. 6:1ff

¹⁷ Heb. 2:7

¹⁸ Num. 22:22ff espec. v31; II Kings 6:17; Heb. 13:2

¹⁹ Gen. 18:16; Jdg. 13:6; c.f. Ez. 1:4ff

²⁰ Mt. 28:3; Ez. 1:13 c.f. Mt. 16:27

²¹ Acts. 23:8

(C) Angelic Organisation.

Angels are called a number of things – angels, archangels, living creatures, seraphim and cherubim.²² They are also referred to as sons of God, holy ones, spirits, watchers, thrones, rulers, dominions, principalities and powers, some of which appear to indicate groupings within the angelic realm.²³ In addition to this, they also have personal names ascribed to them – Michael and Gabriel being mentioned.²⁴ In heaven, they are called an army or a host, and the size of this host varies from 12 legions, to myriads and thousands, but these are probably symbolic for very large numbers.²⁵ Angels form a choir who serve at God's throne, singing, playing instruments and using censers.²⁶ They are also called a court, who stand round God's throne and sing praises to Him, and converse with Him,²⁷ perhaps having a level of influence too.²⁸ As with human courts there seem to be different roles, ranks and levels of authority assigned to different angels - the simple fact that there are angels and *archangels* indicates a hierarchical organisation, all of which is under Christ's authority.²⁹

²² Rev. 5:11; 4:7; Is. 6:2-6; Gen. 3:24; Ez. 1:4ff

²³ Job 1:6; P.s. 85:5-7; Heb. 1:14; Dan 4:13; Col. 1:16; Eph. 1:21

²⁴ Dan. 10:13; Rev. 12:7; Lk. 1:19

²⁵ Mt. 26:53; Rev. 5:11; Heb. 12:22; Deut. 33:2

²⁶ Rev. 5:9; 14:3; 15:3 c.f. Is. 6; Lk. 2:13ff

²⁷ Rev. 7:11; Job 1:6; Ps. 89:7

²⁸ c.f. I Kings 22:19; Jer. 23:18-22; Lk. 12:8-9

²⁹ Eph. 1:20; 3:10; I Ptr. 3:22

(D) Angelic Knowledge.

Angels have vast knowledge, beyond that of men, but limited by God. ³⁰ They have an undefined form of speech and language, and they can discern between good and evil. ³¹ Angels desire to know more of God, and it is through the Church that God enables them to learn more of Himself. ³²

(E) Angelic Ministry.

Angels take a great interest in the affairs of men. This was true regarding Christ, with angels being with Him throughout his earthly life – His conception and birth, ³³ His adult life, ³⁴ His death, ³⁵ His resurrection, and His ascension. ³⁶ In addition, after the ascension of Christ, angelic activity did not cease and they continued to interact with the fledgling church. ³⁷ The clearest statement about the reality of angelic ministry is in Hebrews 1:14:

Are not all angels ministering servants sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?

³⁰ Mt. 24:36

³¹ I Cor. 13:1; II Sam. 14:17

³² I Ptr 1:12; Eph. 3:10

³³ Lk. 1:26ff; 2:9ff

³⁴ Mt. 4:11; Lk. 22:43

³⁵ Mt. 26:53 (If Christ had so chosen)

³⁶ John 20:12; Matt 28:2; Acts 1:10

³⁷ Acts 5:18-20; 8:26-29; 10:3-8; 12:6-11; 27:23-25

The question arises here whether angels minister solely to the faithful, or to all men irrelevant of their beliefs, in order to lead them closer to God; but nonetheless, angelic ministry is real.

Angels rejoice when men repent and turn to God, and come to men in response to prayer.³⁸ It is therefore no surprise the Bible describes a range of instances where angels act within creation, and interact with men. Angels are powerful beings, able to do mighty acts and follow their mission through to its conclusion.³⁹ They bring messages to men from God, and communication can be via dreams,⁴⁰ when the recipient is fully alert,⁴¹ or by an audible voice spoken from heaven.⁴² These need not be one-way conversations, and men can converse with and question angels.⁴³

Angels also accomplish a range of physical tasks, such as rolling away the stone from Christ's tomb, shutting the mouths of the lions when Daniel was in the den, and freeing people from prison.⁴⁴ They also protect people on journeys,⁴⁵ provide physical assistance,⁴⁶ and it may be that angels can perform what are called *psychical* actions, that they can *give strength to* men, also indicated by their involvement in healings.⁴⁷ Wicked angels, in the form of demons, can strongly influence humans, which allows the possibility that a good influence may be exerted by a good angel.⁴⁸

³⁸ Lk. 15:10; Dan. 10:12-13

³⁹ II Sam. 24:16 c.f. II Ptr. 2:11; Mt. 28:2; Ps. 35:7ff

⁴⁰ Mt. 1:20; 2:13; Gen. 31:11

⁴¹ Lk. 1:11; 2:9-11; Mt. 28:2-7; Mk. 16:5; Lk. 24:4

⁴² Jn. 12:29

⁴³ Lk. 1:26-38

⁴⁴ Mt. 28:2; Dan. 6:22; Acts 12:6ff

⁴⁵ Gen. 16:7 c.f. 24:7

⁴⁶ Mt. 4:11

⁴⁷ Lk. 22:43; John 5:3-4

⁴⁸ Lk. 8:30

Again, the opposite side of protection is also shown where angels are portrayed as ones who execute God's wrath on earth.⁴⁹

In an enigmatic reference in Genesis 48:16, an angel is said to have *redeemed* Jacob from *all evil*; whether that means salvation or protection is not clear, and it is not clearly answered either. One answer could see it as referring to the Angel of the Lord, who, at times is identified with God. However, elsewhere, he is clearly an angel, so the question remains.⁵⁰ Along similar lines, angels are said to pray for the saints and present the prayers of the saints to God, which raises the question of what role angels may have in mediating between God and man, and how men should respond to this.⁵¹

Angels guide and protect men, and the argument has developed that men have Guardian Angels. Some passages indicate an individualised ministry (using the pronouns *his* or *their*),⁵² but the term is only clearly used in Acts 12:15. The idea of Guardian Angels could further be supported by indications of the closeness of angels and men as a single society, and that both are called *elect*.⁵³ Further, Revelation 1:20 talks of the seven churches having seven angels, Michael is said to have a role protecting Israel, which could be developed into there being Guardian Angels for churches and nations.⁵⁴ However, it is also argued that this protection is general and does not demand a specific angel for a specific person/situation.

⁴⁹ II Kings 19:53; II Sam. 24:16; Gen. 3:24

⁵⁰ Gen. 16:10-13; Gen. 31:11-13; II Sam. 24:16; Zech. 1:11-13

⁵¹ Rev. 8:3-4

⁵² Mt. 18:10; Acts 12:15; Ps. 34:7, 90:11

⁵³ Heb. 12:22; Rom. 11:7; I Tim. 5:21

⁵⁴ Dan. 12:1; Jude 9; I Thess. 4:16

In death too, angels, are involved. In Jude 9 Michael fought with Satan over the body of Moses, and in Luke 16:22 Poor Lazarus was carried to Abraham's side (i.e. heaven) by angels. If one does not die before the Second Coming, then one will still witness angels in action, blowing the trumpet and assisting Christ in His work during His Return. ⁵⁵ Angels come with Christ, and they help Him with the reaping and gathering, the separation of the wheat and the chaff, and weeding out evil doers. ⁵⁶

(F) Warnings about Angels.

Warnings about angels fall into two broad categories. First, one must not worship them for this places them in the position that only God holds. Second, one cannot always trust angelic visitations, for demons can masquerade as angels and can teach false doctrine and lie. ⁵⁷

(2) The Apocrypha

Generally, the Apocrypha follows the same line as the Old Testament, but elaboration and development from the Old Testament position is evident, some of which does not appear in the New Testament.

⁵⁵ I Thess. 4:16; II Thess. 1:7

⁵⁶ Mt. 24:31; Mt. 13:41; Rev. 14:14-20

⁵⁷ Col. 2:18; Rev. 19:10; II Cor. 11:14

Angels are a vast host gathered before God, where they await to do His will, and be sent into the world in the form of wind and fire. ⁵⁸ There is a distinction between good and bad angels, and angels chase and bind demons. ⁵⁹ Angels praise and bless God, and encourage men to do the same. ⁶⁰ Along with God, they see the sins of men, and men's actions cannot be hidden from their gaze. ⁶¹

There are seven holy angels (archangels), of whom one is called Raphael, another Uriel, and yet another is Jeremiel. ⁶² These angels go into the presence of God with men's prayers and present them to Him, ⁶³ and they are also sent from heaven in response to prayer to assist and protect men. ⁶⁴ For instance, an angel accompanied Tobias on a journey in order to protect him. ⁶⁵ Angels can take on human form, but men cannot recognise them, although the main clue is that angels are not able to eat or drink human food. ⁶⁶ Angels also carry out the sentence or vengeance of God, in both a collective context (nation), and also in individual lives exacting specific punishments. ⁶⁷

Angels communicate with men in a number of ways, such as the apocalyptic visions of II Esdras where an angel reveals events and visions to Ezra. Ezra is also reprimanded and taught by an angel. ⁶⁸ Angels are shown to have great insight into

⁵⁸ II Esd. 6:3; II Esd. 8:21-22

⁵⁹ Tob. 5:21; II Mac. 11:6; Tob. 8:3

⁶⁰ Tob. 7:15; Tob. 12:6ff

⁶¹ II Esd. 16:66

⁶² II Esd. 4:1; 4:36

⁶³ Tob. 12:11-15

⁶⁴ II Mac. 11:6; 15:22-23; Bel. 33-39

⁶⁵ Tobit 5:16-21

⁶⁶ Tob. 5 (espec. v21); Tob 12:19

⁶⁷ Sir. 48:21; I Mac. 7:41; II Mac. 2:25; Sus. 55-59

⁶⁸ II Esd. 2:44ff; 4:1ff; 7:1

the ways and will of God, but are not told all things and have limits upon their knowledge. ⁶⁹ Angels are also shown to have certain powers, such a healing and a psychical ability to give strength to men. ⁷⁰

To conclude, the evidence contained in both Old and New Testaments and the Apocrypha, while clearly testifying to the existence and ministry of angels, is not comprehensive in detailing the particulars. However, during the Patristic and Mediaeval periods greater detail was added and a comprehensive system of doctrine was developed, and it is to these periods that we now turn.

⁶⁹ II Esd. 5:31; 4:52

⁷⁰ Tob. 3:16-17; II Esd. 5:15

Chapter 2

PATRISTIC AND MEDIAEVAL ANGELOLOGY

Introduction.

Before beginning this section, it must be recognised that it is not an attempt to give a comprehensive overview of angelology in these periods. It is, rather, focused on the issues that will be raised within the Church of England between 1547 and 1662, and it is deliberately synoptically structured to highlight these issues. There are two reasons for this. First is that a study of that magnitude is too large to be feasibly included as background. The second is that by the 16th and 17th centuries, issues that were live during the Patristic period had ceased to be so. For example, under the influence of Origen, angels were seen as *logikoi*, spirit beings co-eternal with God, who, due to their conduct either became angels, men or demons. However, the Cappadocian Fathers rejected this cosmology, and their position that angels were spirit beings created by God, who are eternal to, but not from, all eternity, became the standard and unchallenged line in all Christian thought. Therefore, it is of no value to my thesis to discuss Origen's distinctive views on the origin of angels and surrounding debates, since the issue is never raised in our period. On the other hand, the question over the existence and role of Guardian angels was not only widely examined in the Patristic period, but also during our period too, so this will gain some attention in order to lay a foundation for the discussions ahead.

Further to this, the many angles and tangents produced by the Fathers were usually neatly tied up by the Mediaeval Scholastics which, as will become apparent, meant that often the refined Scholastic version of a Patristic position became the starting point for discussion. Parente writes:

(The) fluctuation of opinions continued more or less throughout the Patristic period. Greater harmony and unity of thought were reached by the Schoolmen.¹

A good example of this is that the Pseudo-Dionysian hierarchical system doesn't explicitly include Guardian Angels, and Pseudo-Dionysius is far from clear as to whether they exist at all. However, through Lombard and Aquinas they became naturally incorporated into it, and so by the time of the Reformation it is the hierarchical system refined through scholastic eyes that is debated and criticised, not just the original system of Dionysius.

(1) Patristic Angelology

Before beginning this section, the influence of Neo-Platonism needs to be recognised, as it strongly shapes how the Fathers understood the universe they lived in. They were rarely uncritical of secular philosophy, but the influence is undeniable.

Neo-Platonism was developed by Plotinus (205-269), and is based on the idea that God is the absolutely transcendent and inaccessible One, from which everything else emanates. *The totality of beings exists in a hierarchy ordered to the One (Good), which*

¹ P. Parente *The Angels* (Illinois: Tan Books, 1994) p.112

*some Neo-Platonists regarded as God.*² There are grades of being which all come from the One, which are inter-related, and there is a procession of causes between the grades of being that aim to bring a likeness to the first cause, and ultimately, union with the One.³ One theme that was important to Neo-Platonism was the idea of mediation. Fundamental to Plotinus was his desire to relate to the One, and also to everything else, and he found that this was achieved through various mediating devices, since *to relate two things is to invoke a third that mediates.*⁴ The universe was arranged in levels that mediate and relate one to another, and they took the form of hierarchies. Pseudo Dionysius (who I will discuss later) took this model to its logical conclusion from within a Christian context, but others too saw the universe in this way, and angels became seen as one of the most important ways God interacted with His creation and people.

For the sake of clarity, the broad areas that will be described in this section are as follows:

- (a) Angelic Creation and Fall.
- (b) Angelic Ministry and Guardian Angels.
- (c) Ministry towards the Church and Nations.
- (d) Angelic Imitation.
- (e) Angelic Knowledge.
- (f) Angelic Organisation and Hierarchies.

² Ed. G.S. Wakefield *A Dictionary of Christian Spirituality* (London: SCM Press, 1983) p.275

³ Wakefield p.275

⁴ A. Louth *Denys The Aeropagite* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1989) p.13

While many Fathers wrote about angels, the main thinkers for us are Origen, the Cappadocian Fathers, Augustine, and Pseudo-Dionysius, and so this section will focus on their thought and works, but not to the exclusion of others.

(A) Angelic Creation, Fall and Nature.

Origen pleads a level of ignorance with regards the origin and nature of angels,⁵ and also for Basil, the angelic creation is mysterious, saying that *the creation of the heavenly powers is passed over in silence*, but is clear that God did create all things.⁶ However, Basil suggests that angels were created in light, since it is *a condition fitting for them to live in*, and he sees orders of angels as a part of that creation.⁷ Augustine too said angels were created by God in perfection above the firmament,⁸ and while there is no Scriptural description of this, it probably comes under the designation of light⁹ - the distinction between the good and bad angels being the separation of light and dark in Genesis 1.¹⁰ All angels were created good, and dependent on God. The angelic fall demonstrates that since all perversion is contrary to nature, God created their nature so good that it was infinitely harmful for angels to be separated from him.¹¹

⁵ Origen: De Prin. pref: 10

⁶ De Sp. Sanct. 16

⁷ Hex. 2:5

⁸ Gen. Lit. I:8-9

⁹ Aug: De Civ. IX:9 ; Gen. Lit. II:8 c.f. I:4-5, 9, 17; c.f. E. Portalie *A Guide to the thought of St. Augustine*. (London: Burns & Oates, 1960) p.143

¹⁰ Aug: De Civ. XI:19 c.f. XI:28

¹¹ Aug: De Civ. XI:1

Gregory Nazianzus saw that the angelic nature is inferior to the divine nature, but far higher than human nature.¹² Gregory of Nyssa said that angels (and men) have created natures which survive into eternity, but this eternal nature into the future does not mean they are eternal from time past,¹³ and that angels are incorporeal (or as incorporeal as a created being can be) beings of fire and spirit.¹⁴ Origen said the angelic nature was luminous and heavenly, a special form of matter that is subtle and pure.¹⁵ Again, Basil called them ariel spirits, or immaterial fire. They exist in spatial terms, and appear to the worthy, taking on a physical nature - a nature that may not be totally alien to their spiritual nature.¹⁶ Augustine suggests that angels have bodies, but he is not clear. For example, angelic bodies are spiritual and incorporeal, but could also include other elements such as fire or clouds.¹⁷ It is likely though, that he did not see them as having bodies as such, but was uncertain of what their nature was.¹⁸

Gregory of Nyssa said the angelic nature is not impassible, and can change, since they have the capability to reject God. Basil says similar but he recognises the issues with this.¹⁹ Impassibility is an attribute of God - yet angelic confirmation (the act of God which means that angels now cannot now fall as the demons once did) suggests they

¹² Greg. Naz.: Th. Or. II:3; II:8; III:13

¹³ Greg. Nyssa: Against Eunomius 8:5

¹⁴ Greg. Naz.: Th. Or. II:31

¹⁵ Hom. Matt. 13:17; Con. Cel. 4:57; On Prayer 26:6; De Prin. 2:3:3 c.f. A. Scott *Origen and the Life Of The Stars* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991) p.157

¹⁶ De Sp. Sanct. 16 c.f. Ps. Dion. C.H. XV:2

¹⁷ Aug.: De Trin. III:1, 10

¹⁸ Portalie p.143

¹⁹ Hom. 17:1

are impassible: His answer is not to commit himself beyond saying that any impassibility is solely due to a work of God, and is not inherent.²⁰

Basil wrote that angels are ministering spirits brought into being and sustained by the operation of the Triune Godhead. Angels were not created as *spiritual infants*, who grew toward perfection by a gradual process of being made worthy by the Spirit. When they were created, their nature had holiness laid as a foundation, which meant they fell with difficulty. Basil sees them as being immediately confirmed in sanctity so they possessed a *steadfastness in virtue* by the gift of the Holy Spirit.²¹ Angels, like men, could resist the Spirit and fall despite their nature, so they require the Spirit to confirm them in order not to fall now, and while they retain true free will, they can never fall away from God.²² Angels rely on God for their obedience, sanctification and perfection, and if the Spirit were removed then the angelic society would be thrown into chaos, confusion and destruction.²³ Confirmation is not an inherent part of their nature but is a given condition that needs constant maintenance by God.²⁴ Without the Spirit, even the most plain of tasks is impossible. For example, Gabriel could only speak to Mary by virtue of the Spirit.²⁵

With such a strong foundation, why did they fall? There are two basic reasons given for it:

²⁰ Greg. Naz.: Th. Or. III:15

²¹ Hom. 15:4 c.f. R. Ruether *Gregory of Nazianzus: Rhetor & Philosopher* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991) p.132

²² De Sp. Sanct. 16

²³ De Sp. Sanct. 16

²⁴ De Sp. Sanct. 20

²⁵ De Sp. Sanct. 16

(i) Rejection of God

For Augustine, the fall of the angels was not due to God, as God does not create evil, only good.²⁶ The angels had both a good nature and freewill, but some of them fell due to the abuse of this freewill.²⁷ Yet since they were all created identically, and nothing external drove them to fall, why did some fall and not others? Augustine doesn't answer this clearly, but the implication is that his idea of predestination was also applied to the angels.²⁸ Augustine's discussion of the angelic fall concludes that the positions of both groups are now fixed.²⁹ All angels were created in a similar state with similar nature, wisdom, reason and intelligence, and also grace, but they had no foreknowledge of the Fall, or of the fullness of the eternal bliss with God, just the choice to be obedient or not, and to live with God.³⁰ However, with their freewill, the evil angels, perhaps at the moment of their creation (he is not dogmatic on this point), chose to reject God, and then after this God revealed the fullness of the eternal bliss with Him as the reward for obedience. Those who remained obedient were assured of their position and were rewarded with the *fullness of beatitude* in which they knew they would always be blessed.³¹ The first sin was pride and envy of God, but subsequently the demons' sin proliferates into all areas,³² and there is no return to

²⁶ Portalie p.143-44

²⁷ Aug: De Civ. XI:33 c.f. XII:1; G.R. Evans *Augustine On Evil* (CUP, 1984) p.95

²⁸ Aug: De Civ. XII:9 c.f. Ed. J. McWilliam *Augustine: From Rhetor to Theologian* (Ontario, 1992) p.139-41, 146-7

²⁹ Aug: De Civ. XI:11-15

³⁰ Aug: De Civ. XII:9

³¹ Comm. Gen. 11

³² Gen. Lit. XI:14, 18

God for them. ³³ They will remain locked into the atmosphere around the earth until Christ's return, when He will shackle them all in Hell. ³⁴

(ii) Jealousy of Man

Irenaeus saw the sin of the angels as the refusal to recognise Adam as the image of God who would eventually be exalted above the angels, by the Incarnation. ³⁵ In a similar vein, Gregory of Nyssa thought that an angel was given guardianship of the earth, but became jealous of God's plan to exalt the human nature above that of the angelic nature and rebelled against God. ³⁶ In this light, the establishment of the Church is God reaffirming this plan to establish and exalt man, ³⁷ which means one should not be surprised to know that angels are involved with the Church, communicating God's will to people, and that demons attack the Church. ³⁸

In *The City of God*, Augustine envisages the Heavenly City as where the good angels live, and from where the evil angels have been ejected. ³⁹ The elect humans make up the deficit in the heavenly population created by the angelic fall, but the numbers involved are unknown. ⁴⁰ (There is also a corresponding city where the wicked go for all eternity with the devil and his demons.) ⁴¹ The Church is a twofold entity, with humans on earth and the angels in heaven, with the angels living in blessedness and

³³ Gen. Lit. XI:23, 30

³⁴ Aug: De Civ. IX:22 c.f. Portalie p144; Evans p.102-3

³⁵ Irenaeus: Dem. Ap. 16

³⁶ Dis. Cat. 6:5

³⁷ Hom. Cant. 13

³⁸ Flight to Pontus 62

³⁹ De Civ. 11:1, 12:9, 14:28

⁴⁰ Enchiridion 29 c.f. *A Monument to St. Augustine* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1930) p.66

giving assistance to men on earth. The two parts make one fellowship in eternity, one in God's love, and appointed for the worship of God.⁴² While angels forever gaze upon God, they are constantly aware of earthly concerns. This is no contradiction since they are capable of this dual act.⁴³ Although within the scheme of salvation *Christ did not die for the angels*, clearly they benefit from the atonement through the restoration of the heavenly city and the repair of the damage caused by the Fall.⁴⁴ In a similar vein, Origen and others developed the tradition of seeing the parable of the lost sheep as referring to angels and men, with the angels as the 99 and mankind as the one lost sheep who Christ came to save.⁴⁵

(iii) The Fallen Angels

While this thesis is not about the fallen angels, it needs to be noted what various thinkers thought of them, as this would shape later objections to certain understandings of angelic ministry. Both Platonism and Neo-Platonism said that there was a pantheon of pagan gods, or *diamones*, that were morally neutral supernatural beings who were to be invoked to mediate between man and the One (or God). Justin Martyr (c. 140) in his *Dialogue With Trypho* gained the understanding that these *diamones* were actually evil angels, and the pagan god were the allies of Satan.⁴⁶ This understanding was taken on by subsequent Christian thinkers, like Tertullian,⁴⁷

⁴¹ Enchiridon 111

⁴² Enchiridon 56 c.f. Gen. Lit. IV:25

⁴³ Gen. Lit. IV:29

⁴⁴ Enchiridon 61-62

⁴⁵ Origen: Comm. Gen. 12:102; Hom. Num. 19:4; Hom. Gen. 13:2 c.f. Irenaeus: Adv. Haer. 3:19:3; Cyril of Jeru.: Cat. 15:24

⁴⁶ Justin: Dial. 7; c.f. E. Pagels *The Origins Of Satan* (London: Allen Lane Penguin Press, 1995) pp.119ff

⁴⁷ Most clearly: *The Instruction Of Commodianus* 3; c.f. *Apologeticus* 21-22

and Origen in *Contra Celsum*, who argued that they were a cause of evil and catastrophe in the world,⁴⁸ but was given classically concrete form by Augustine in *Dei Cive*. Diamones lacked proper divine power, could deceive men and were unworthy of worship, and man's clouded knowledge led him to worship them falsely.⁴⁹ Thus diamones (good or bad) had nothing to offer as intermediaries and, in the final analysis, there was only one mediator – Christ:

We must by no means seek, through the supposed mediation of demons, to avail ourselves or benefice of the gods, or rather the good angels.⁵⁰

(B) Angelic Ministry

This twofold nature of the Church was highlighted by early writers, and widely developed – as we shall see. It was built on the premise that angels were an integral part of the Universe created by God, and played a part in how it functioned. Origen wrote:

There is a certain angel appointed for the earth, another appointed for the waters, another for the air and a fourth for the fire. ... (And) an angel

⁴⁸ Con. Cel. 8:31-32

⁴⁹ Civ. Dei IV: 32; IX:4; IX: 22

⁵⁰ Civ. Dei. VIII:25: Hardy sums up Augustine's attitude well: *What the Platonists seek for in vain in their diamones is mediation between God and man. This Christians have in the true mediator of God and man, Jesus Christ.* E.R Hardy *The City Of God* an article in Ed. R. W. Battenhouse *A Companion To The Study Of Saint Augustine* (Michigan: Baker Book House, 1979) p.266 c.f. Evans pp.101ff

has been appointed also for sun, another for the moon, another also for the stars. ⁵¹

Also, as we shall see, many saw them with specific responsibility over individuals, bishops, churches and nations, as a part of God's providence and scheme of salvation. God uses angels through a celestial hierarchy (again, to be discussed later), but it is to be noted that, for example, Clement of Alexandria, saw the universe as a chain of causes flowing from God through the angels to creation - *for on one original first Principle which acts according to the Father's will, the second (angels) and third depend (the physical world and men).* ⁵²

Gregory of Nyssa saw that angels are given specific organisational roles by God to ensure that His purposes within Creation come to pass as He intends, ⁵³ and Gregory of Nazianzus thought angels embrace different parts of the world, or are appointed over different districts of the Universe by God. ⁵⁴ Augustine also taught that each living creature has an angel in charge of it, ⁵⁵ and that angels especially assist men. For example, angels take men to heaven at death, ⁵⁶ inform the souls of events on earth, ⁵⁷ and God hears the prayers of the martyrs and *through the ministry of angels gives help for men.* ⁵⁸ Angels can give prophecy, and the angelic nature can enter into men and influence them, but this is written specifically about demons. ⁵⁹ Angels

⁵¹ Origen: Hom. Jer. 10:6

⁵² Clem. Alex: Strom. VII:2

⁵³ Dis. Cat. 6

⁵⁴ Greg. Naz.: Th. Or. II:31

⁵⁵ Div. Dem. 1; 89; 79 ; c.f. Portalie p.144

⁵⁶ Care For The Dead 2

⁵⁷ Care For The Dead 15

⁵⁸ Care For The Dead 16

⁵⁹ Divination of Demons. 5-6

communicate through spiritual powers, and can produce visions to the spirit or mind, and they can speak, not audibly, but directly to the soul, and from within the soul.⁶⁰

Augustine said that from heaven God diffused Himself through all things. *Grosser and lower bodies* (men) are directed by *subtler and stronger bodies* (angels), to the point where nothing happens throughout creation that is not commanded or permitted by the angelic court that is around God. God shapes everything that happens, and He moves both men and angels according to His will.⁶¹

Three broad areas were cited as to where angels specifically ministered to mankind:

(i) Peace and Protection

The role of an angel is to protect individuals and guide the soul towards Christ, with those doing the work of the Gospel gaining extra special protection.⁶² The average Christian too, has the blessing of peace in a protective sense, for example on journeys. Basil classically wrote:

(We) pray to the loving God that they may be given an angel of peace as a support and companion on the way, and that they may find you in good health and perfect tranquillity.⁶³

⁶⁰ Enchiridion 59

⁶¹ Aug.: De Trin. III:4

⁶² Origen: Hom. Num. 11:4

⁶³ Basil: Ep. 1:11

Going further, some such as Hilary saw that the protection of angels was the only way one could resist sin, demons and human weakness. ⁶⁴ Angels, too, not only provide external peace and protection but also inner peace, protection and guidance too, since *God procures life and peace through his angels for those who are worthy.* ⁶⁵ Angels teach and instruct men so they can reach perfection and begin to comprehend God, and they move men's souls to guide them towards God and their own exaltation to the angelic realm. ⁶⁶ Angels stop thoughts put into the soul by demons, and give the power to discern spirits so the soul can understand which thought is from God, and which is from the devil. ⁶⁷ Further, angels remove all things that hinder the soul. ⁶⁸

(ii) Penitence and Repentance

The earliest example of this is in the Shepherd of Hermas, his whole treatise being the words of an angel calling for repentance and penitence. ⁶⁹ Repentance leads the soul closer to God, but more than that, it heals the soul from the wounds of sin, and in this vein Origen used the story of the Good Samaritan, likening the angel to the Inn-Keeper whom the Samaritan asked to look after the injured man – and he did diligently care for and heal the man. From this, Origen thought that it was the angels who drove the prayer for men's healing. ⁷⁰

⁶⁴ Hilary: Ps. 134

⁶⁵ Gregory of Nyssa: Com. Cant. 14

⁶⁶ Origen: Comm. Cant. 3:14; Comm. John 6:63-66, 97

⁶⁷ Origen: Comm. Cant. 3:15 c.f. R. Cadiou *Origen : His Life At Alexandria* (London: Herder Books, 1944) p.196

⁶⁸ Origen: Comm. Matt. 10:2

⁶⁹ Most clearly expressed in Hermas: Vis. 5

⁷⁰ Origen: Hom. Luke. 34; Comm. Matt. 13:5

(iii) Prayer

The role of angels in prayer relates to both private and liturgical prayer. Following the Apocrypha, the Fathers developed the idea that angels offer prayers to God. Talking of how one should pray (and live) properly Tertullian wrote that *how much more is that deed most irreligious under the eye of the living God while the angel of prayer is still standing by?*⁷¹ Angels also join with Christians in prayer, and Origen describes how:

An angel offers up his prayers through the one High Priest to the God of all, and also joins his own prayers with those of the man he is committed to keeping.⁷²

Angels achieve this by moving between heaven and earth constantly.⁷³ Origen also thought angels reminded the one praying of the things needed, and they do what they can in line with what God requires.⁷⁴ Angels are always in the presence of God, and they pray with, mediate, and co-operate with men in what is sought,⁷⁵ and this interaction and co-operation is important to Origen's angelology. Putting an even greater emphasis on the idea of co-operation, men are in debt to their angel for the work on their behalf.⁷⁶

⁷¹ Tert: De. Or. 16 c.f. Cyprian : De. Or. 32-33

⁷² Origen: Con. Cel. VIII:36

⁷³ Origen: Con. Cel. V:4

⁷⁴ Origen: On Prayer 11:1-4

⁷⁵ Origen: On Prayer 11:5 c.f. J. Trigg *Origen: Bible & Philosophy in the 3rd Century* (Georgia: John Knox Press, 1983) p.161

⁷⁶ Origen: On Prayer 28:3

Guardian Angels

From this basis, where angels protect and promote a Godly life, the question of Guardian Angels naturally arises. The first person to clearly examine these things was Origen, and his essential line wasn't really challenged until the Reformation, merely refined and developed. For Origen, angels are:

Ministering spirits sent forth to do service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation. They ascend bringing the prayers of men into the purest heavenly region of the universe, or to places even purer than these beyond the heavens. They descend from there bringing to each individual according to his merits some benefit which God commands them to administer to those who are to receive his favours.⁷⁷

Many others too taught, in one form or another, the existence of a Guardian Angel, and it became a commonly held doctrine.⁷⁸

The angelic role is to take blessings from God to men, and prayers from men to God. Men are commanded to worship and imitate God, just as angels are,⁷⁹ and just as Christ defends men, if angels imitate Christ, then angels will too defend men, and from this develops the idea that angels guard Christians.⁸⁰ Angels do not control that

⁷⁷ Origen: Con. Cel. V:4

⁷⁸ E.g. Basil: Against Eunomius III:1; John Chrys: Hom. Col. 3:4 ; Eusebius: Dem. Ev. 4 :6

⁷⁹ Origen: Con. Cel. 5:5 – Imitation will be further discussed later.

⁸⁰ Origen: Con. Cel. 8:27

which harms and destroys men, but those who live according to God's will live in close communion with angels.⁸¹ Due to this closeness, Origen can say that angels are:

Beings (who) regard as kinsmen and friends those who imitate their piety towards God and assist those who call upon God, and who truly pray in obtaining their salvation. They appear to them and think it their duty to hear their prayers, and as it were by one consent to visit with blessing and salvation those who pray to God, to whom themselves they also pray.⁸²

To those who pray from pure motives, God will not only answer the prayer but also *send a particular Guardian angel to work with him.*⁸³ However, this delegation has a flip side too, since repeated sin can lead to the loss of one's Guardian Angel.⁸⁴ Guardian Angels are specially affirmed for children, to protect and to teach,⁸⁵ yet *child* need not refer not to age alone, but also to the stature of the soul. One must attain to a greatness of soul, and at first the soul needs a nursemaid (or angel) to assist it. The angel leads the soul through trials to perfection until it meets with God.⁸⁶ Gregory of Nyssa not only taught the existence of an appointed Guardian angel as a part of God's providence, but also a demon too. It is of interest, though, that he primarily roots it in tradition, not Scripture:

⁸¹ Origen: Con. Cel. 8:31-32

⁸² Origen: Con. Cel. 8:34 c.f. De Prin. II:10:7

⁸³ Origen: On Prayer 6:4

⁸⁴ Origen: On Prayer 6:4

⁸⁵ Origen: Comm. Cant. 2:3/8/9

⁸⁶ Comm. Matt. 13:26

There is a doctrine (which derives its trustworthiness from the tradition of the Fathers) which says that after our nature fell into sin God did not disregard our fall and withhold his providence. No, on the one hand, he had appointed an angel with an incorporeal nature to help in the life of each person and, on the other hand, he also appointed the corrupter who, by an evil and maleficent demon, afflicts the life of man and contrives against our nature.⁸⁷

By rational demonstration the good angel shows the benefits of virtue, whereas the demon enslaves the senses of those who do not exercise their intellect.⁸⁸ Similarly, Origen thought that if a good thought appears in a man's heart, then the Guardian Angel is speaking, and if an evil thought appeared, it was the bad angel.⁸⁹ Further, Basil calls angels witnesses set over men as *tutors* and *guardians*,⁹⁰ and envisages that help from God is fulfilled by the presence of angels.⁹¹ Every person has a Guardian angel to fortify the soul, but it can be driven away by a person's sin.⁹² While not explicitly stating that it is the Guardian Angel, Basil also sees the role of the angel as a protection for the souls of faithful men after death, since angels have dominion over them while on earth, and so shall have when they enter into heaven.⁹³ From here Basil sees the goal of the human life to be of equal honour with the angels,⁹⁴ and along with others saw that angels escort the soul after death into heaven.⁹⁵

⁸⁷ Gregory Nyssa: Life of Moses 2:45 c.f. 2:52-3; Hermas: Comm. VI:2; Ps. Barn. 18:1

⁸⁸ Gregory Nyssa: Life of Moses 2:46

⁸⁹ Origen: Hom. Lk. 12:4 c.f. Trigg p.105

⁹⁰ De Sp. Sanct. 13

⁹¹ Ep. 11

⁹² Hom. 16:5

⁹³ Hom. 19:9

⁹⁴ Hom. 22

⁹⁵ Basil: Hom. 19:9; Tert.: De An. 53; Origen: Hom. Num. 5:3, Comm. John 19:15; John Chrys.: Hom. Laz. 2:2

Gregory Nazianzus makes it clearer by saying that men enter the angelic realm at death.⁹⁶

The closeness of the soul and its angel is so powerful that Origen calls it a form of marriage, with the soul as the wife and the angel the husband. Origen wonders whether the two can divorce and the soul find another angel, but thought that if that could happen then it would be *not of a good omen*.⁹⁷ With such closeness, it is no surprise that the Guardian Angel is held responsible for their charge, and rewarded or punished accordingly.⁹⁸

One issue that brought two distinct answers was *When do men get their Guardian Angel?* Is it from birth (which would indicate both Christians and non-Christians have an angel), or at baptism (thus confirming conversion and the move from the kingdom of darkness to light)? Origen is not clear on this, saying in one place that both Christians and non-Christians have an angel,⁹⁹ but elsewhere saying that only Christians in a state of grace have angels.¹⁰⁰ The *from birth for all* view-point was, for example, supported by Tertullian,¹⁰¹ Jerome,¹⁰² and John Chrysostom.¹⁰³ The stance that they are *for the faithful only* was, for example, upheld by Basil and Clement of Alexandria.¹⁰⁴ Further than this, both Origen and Tertullian thought that the work of angels began in the very womb, but it is not clear whether this was a generalised

⁹⁶ Poem 3:335 c.f. Ruether pp.134-5

⁹⁷ Comm. Matt. 14:21 c.f. Trigg p.105

⁹⁸ Origen: Hom. Lk. 34:8 c.f. 35:4 c.f. Scott pp.135-6

⁹⁹ Origen: Comm. Matt. 13 :26

¹⁰⁰ Origen: De Prin. II:10:7

¹⁰¹ Tert: De Bap. 6

¹⁰² Jerome: In Matt 18 :10

¹⁰³ John Chys.: Hom. Acts XXVI

¹⁰⁴ Basil: In Ps. 35:5; Clem. Alex.: De Adorat. In Sp. IV

angelic protection, or the angelic protection provided by the mother's Guardian Angel, or that of the child/foetus's appointed Guardian Angel.¹⁰⁵ Again, *Can a wicked man have a good angel?* Origen certainly held it to be so, and also thought that one could lose one's angel due to sin.¹⁰⁶ Origen also wondered if when the man comes to Christ, then his angel does also, which suggests that angels are not fixed in their position after the angelic fall, and may go from being demons to angels.¹⁰⁷

From here an interesting idea arose in Origen's thought, based on Colossians 1, that Christ died for the whole of the heavenly church – men and angels. He saw the crucifixion as a two-fold event, in that Christ's physical body was the sacrifice for humankind, and there was an invisible spiritual sacrifice for all rational creatures. As such Origen could say that Christ came as a human to save humans, and as an angel to save angels.¹⁰⁸ On the other hand, Augustine was very clear on the issue that *Christ did not die for the angels.*¹⁰⁹

However, for all the Fathers who supported the doctrine of Guardian Angels, significantly some were less than sure. For Augustine, the idea of Guardian Angels is conspicuous by its absence from his writings. In his *Commentary on the Psalms* when talking of Psalm 91:11, he says nothing of it and relates the verse directly to angels protecting Christ in His ministry on earth. Similarly, when writing on Psalm 34:7, no mention is made of Guardian Angels, but he sees the *Angel of the Lord* as referring

¹⁰⁵ Origen: Comm. John 13:329; Tert. De. An. 37:1

¹⁰⁶ Origen: De Prin. II :10 :7

¹⁰⁷ Comm. Matt 13:27

¹⁰⁸ Origen: Hom. Lk. 1:3; Comm. John 1:31; Hom. Gen. 8:8 c.f. Scott pp.141-2

¹⁰⁹ En. 60-61

directly to Christ Himself.¹¹⁰ Again, Pseudo-Dionysius gives no explicit teaching on the subject, seemingly focusing much more on the greater picture of hierarchies – as we shall see later. He is clear that angels help men, and he calls angels *good-leaders*, but he never uses the term Guardian Angel, or anything similar.¹¹¹ And like Augustine, when citing the classic verse advocating Guardian Angels, he never uses the opportunity to expound on the subject.¹¹² Generally too, Augustine is cautious about many areas of angelology – for example, the angelic nature, role and abilities,¹¹³ angelic speech (which is *beyond describing*),¹¹⁴ and how theophanies occur.¹¹⁵ Ultimately, he wrote:

Asking these questions and answering them with such guesses as we can *is not a useless exercise for the mind*, if the discussion be kept within bounds and if those who take part avoid the error of thinking what they do not know. For what need is there of affirming or denying or making nice distinctions about these and similar matters, when ignorance of them imputes no blame?¹¹⁶

This caution is the most distinctive aspect of Augustine's approach, and one the Reformers would often appeal to. Yet it should be noted that his caution did not stop

¹¹⁰ Aug.: Comm. Ps.

¹¹¹ E.g. Ps. Dion. : Nom. Div. IV:2, Ep. 8 :6

¹¹² Ed. Luibheid. pp.291ff – For a full list of Biblical Citations used by Dionysius – e.g. Matt. 18:10: Nom. Div. I:8 uses this to say angels have faces, nothing else, and he never references Ps. 34:7, or Ps. 91:11.

¹¹³ Gen. Lit. II:17

¹¹⁴ Aug: De Civ. XV:6

¹¹⁵ Aug: De Civ. XVI:29 c.f. Aug.: De Trin. II:13

¹¹⁶ En. 59 – my italics.

him from investigating as such, nor did it lead to condemnation of investigation, merely proposing dogmatic solutions.

(C) Angelic Ministry Towards The Church.

Developing further the idea of Guardian Angels for individuals, Origen said that Guardian Angels join with men and form a twofold church (*Here is a double Church present, one of men, the other of angels*), since they are one in mind and judgement, but angels only gather in *legitimate* gatherings.¹¹⁷ If someone falls away from Christ his Guardian Angel will highlight this to the rest of the church, and if too many in one Church sin, then it will no longer receive providential attention, and an evil double assembly of sinners and demons meets instead.¹¹⁸ Also, going further than Gregory's thought that church leaders may be like unto angels since they do the will of God,¹¹⁹ Origen said that churches effectively have two bishops – one visible, the other invisible - sharing in the work.¹²⁰ This means angels are very concerned about the Church, which should exhort men to ask God for angelic assistance in the running of churches.¹²¹ There truly is a duality in the Church where angels rejoice with men when praise and truth are given forth.¹²² Clement of Alexandria said similar, seeing the angels of God serving the priests and deacons in the ministering of earthly affairs,¹²³ and Hippolytus specifically saw angels as the Church's defenders.¹²⁴ Origen, along with Pseudo-Dionysius, said that angels are also guardians over

¹¹⁷ Origen : Hom. Lk. 23

¹¹⁸ Origen: On Prayer 31:5-6

¹¹⁹ Greg. Nyssa: Poem 2:529; Or. XI

¹²⁰ Origen: Hom. Lk. 13

¹²¹ Origen: Hom. Lk. 12:5-6

¹²² Origen: Hom. Lk. 23:7-8

¹²³ Strom VII:1 c.f. Hom. in Lev. 9:8

¹²⁴ De Antichr. 59

geographical areas, and have the task of bringing people to a knowledge of Christ.¹²⁵ Again, both Clement of Alexandria and Hippolytus posited a similar belief that God blesses nations through angels, with Clement also including cities as being under angelic guardianship.¹²⁶

Angels worship God, said Gregory Nazianzus, as should all creation, and they stand in the Temple of God.¹²⁷ Like Origen, Basil said that angels were a part of the Church in heaven with the saints,¹²⁸ and Gregory of Nyssa followed the long tradition (along with, for example, Irenaeus, Origen, and Cyril of Jerusalem) of understanding the Parable of the 99 sheep with mankind as the lost one.¹²⁹ Further to this, Tertullian angels assisted in the baptism and entry into the Body of Christ (*In the water, under the influence of the angel, we are cleansed and thus prepared for the Holy Spirit.*)¹³⁰ They not only assisted but rejoiced at each baptism, since it reflected the repentance of a sinner.¹³¹

Applying further detail, Basil saw the Psalms as the work of angels, a *heavenly institution and spiritual incense*,¹³² and other contemporary writers pushed these ideas further. For example, John Chrysostom building on the idea that angels joined with men in Church,¹³³ said that angels were especially present at the Eucharist, and

¹²⁵ Origen: Hom. Lk. 12:3; Ps. Dion. IX:3-4

¹²⁶ Strom. VI:17; VII:2; Comm. Dan. 4:40:4

¹²⁷ Hom. 13:7 c.f. Poem 1:280, Or. 45:23

¹²⁸ Hom. 18:4

¹²⁹ Hom. Cant. 12 c.f. Adv Eun 4: See above p.32

¹³⁰ Tert: De Bap. 6

¹³¹ Cyril of J: Pro. Cat.: XV c.f. Greg. Nyssa: Or. XI

¹³² Hom. 10:2

¹³³ John Chrys: Hom. Heb. 15

the presence of the angels lifted the Eucharistic sacrifice into heaven itself, so men and angels joined in the heavenly liturgy. He had the picture that:

The angels surround the priest and the whole sanctuary and the space before the altar is filled with the heavenly powers come to honour Him who is present upon the altar. ¹³⁴

The liturgy in heaven and on earth are one and reflect and compliment each other, and, in fact, angels are in the very Eucharistic act. ¹³⁵

(D) Angelic Imitation.

The importance of angelic imitation of God is one not immediately apparent, but it needs to be highlighted since it provides a basis for some thinkers as to why angels did or did not fall, and why they conduct their ministry as they do.

It was first clearly expounded by Origen, and while the underpinning cosmology was later rejected, the idea of imitation would recur with later thinkers. Origen saw that alongside God were a fixed number of rational essences, *logikoi* or *noes*. These were co-eternal with God, had freewill, and God desired to exercise His goodness over them. ¹³⁶ All *logikoi* initially looked toward God and desired to imitate Him, but they sinned and moved away from God and a similarity to His image. ¹³⁷ All rational beings are capable of good and evil, yet clearly some were, and are, more evil than

¹³⁴ John Chrys: De Sac. VI:4; Adv. Anom 4

¹³⁵ John Chrys: Adv Anom 3

¹³⁶ Origen: De Prin. 1:2:10

others. Satan was once good, but he exercised his freedom and refused to cleave to good. ¹³⁸ This language of cleaving (elsewhere, *participation* and *pursuing*) shows freewill in action. Sin may be called not acting according to one's nature, or a turning away from God and a looking to oneself, so sin for the angels, which are made in the image of God, is to not act on that image, but to look elsewhere. This would lead to inferior understanding and a moving away from God. ¹³⁹ Angels must, as images, imitate God, ¹⁴⁰ and the aim of angels is to move ever closer to, and acquire the image and likeness of God by imitating God. Likewise, men are called to progress into the angelic realm by the imitation of God, which is achieved by imitating the angels. ¹⁴¹

Pseudo-Dionysius proposed a similar scheme, where his system of hierarchy led angels (who are made in the image of God) and men toward imitation. He wrote that the purpose of hierarchy is to:

Uplift to the imitation of God, to enable beings to be as like as possible to God, since a hierarchy causes its members to be images of God in all respects. ¹⁴²

(E) Angelic Knowledge.

This is one area where a paucity of information and sources in the Patristic era, was made into something concrete by the Mediaeval Scholastics. Clearly, it is of no

¹³⁷ Origen: De Prin. 2:1:3-4

¹³⁸ Origen: De Prin. 1:8:3

¹³⁹ Origen: De Prin. 1:8:4 c.f. Trigg p.104

¹⁴⁰ Origen: De Prin. 3:6:1

¹⁴¹ Origen: Con. Cel. 4:29

surprise that angels and men have different levels and abilities of understanding. Gregory of Nazianzus said that angels have a better understanding than men, due to their incorporeal nature, but still had an inadequate view of God. Angelic understanding is conditioned by their position in the angelic society or ranks – which will be discussed next.¹⁴³ Thus angels have limits on their knowledge, but their knowledge is still enormous - *the knowledge of God being the nourishment of the angels*.¹⁴⁴ Similarly, Origen cited a limitation on angelic knowledge when he said that angels were to hear the Gospel.¹⁴⁵ Further than this, angels were ignorant of Christ's mission – this clearly being shown by the tradition where when Christ ascended, the angels were shocked both by His body of flesh, and by his blood-stained clothing, and needed to have His mission explained to them.¹⁴⁶

Augustine defined this further, saying that angels are rational creatures with knowledge beyond and far different from that of men.¹⁴⁷ He describes this in terms of morning and evening knowledge.¹⁴⁸ While angelic knowledge is forever rooted in the same unchanging Truth, they also grow in understanding as they witness and contemplate God's creative decree and act, and His subsequent sustaining of creation.¹⁴⁹ Morning knowledge is the angelic contemplation of the perfect creative thought in the mind of the Word of God, and is greater than evening knowledge, which is the knowledge of the lower created order – that which is necessarily inferior

¹⁴² Ps. Dion: CH: III:1-2, IV :21

¹⁴³ Greg. Naz.: Th. Or. II:4

¹⁴⁴ Th. Or. III:8 ; c.f. Poems 2:594

¹⁴⁵ Origen: Hom. Lk. 23:9 c.f. M. 13

¹⁴⁶ Justin Martyr: Dial. 36:3-5; Athanasius: Exp. Ps. 23; Origen: Comm. John. 6:56: Greg. Naz.: Th. Or. 45:25

¹⁴⁷ Gen. Lit. V:4 c.f. II:8

¹⁴⁸ Gen. Lit. IV:22-32

¹⁴⁹ Gen. Lit. IV:26



to that of the higher realms.¹⁵⁰ This distinction in knowledge is also described as the good angels holding cheap knowledge of material and temporal matters, which inflates demons with pride. It is not that angels are ignorant of these matters, but their sanctification by the love of God, which is so important to them, makes it cheap. They have a complete knowledge of the material creation, because they understand their first causes in the Word of God.¹⁵¹ For Augustine, angels are taught by God by true contemplation of Him, which brings them true happiness and peace, and men shall also share in this when they become *the equals* of the angels.¹⁵²

(F) Angelic Organisation and Hierarchies.

How the angels were grouped and organised in heaven was topic of much debate, and many questions were debated regarding the hierarchy or ordering. Gregory Nazianzus had a list which cited the groupings as:

Angels and Archangels, Thrones, Dominions, Princedoms, Powers, Splendours, Ascents, Intelligent Powers or Intelligences, pure natures and unalloyed, immovable to evil, or scarcely movable.¹⁵³

This was similar to those of Gregory of Nyssa,¹⁵⁴ Cyril of Jerusalem,¹⁵⁵ John Chrysostom,¹⁵⁶ and Gregory the Great.¹⁵⁷ From this the idea of a hierarchy down which God mediated Himself was developed.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁰ Gen. Lit. IV:31

¹⁵¹ Aug: De Civ. IX:22

¹⁵² En. 62-63

¹⁵³ Greg. Naz.: Th. Or. II:31

¹⁵⁴ Comm. Cant. XV

As already seen, the major role of the angels was to lead the soul to Christ and to prepare it for its journey towards God.¹⁵⁹ The soul goes from transformation to transformation until it reaches God, and angels assist by protection and promoting a godly life, but they have other roles too - to purify, to illuminate, and to unify. This is achieved by the angels being a part of the hierarchy down through which God passes his blessing and salvation.¹⁶⁰ The end result of purification and illumination is ascension up to unification with Christ, and angels accompany men on that journey.¹⁶¹

Angels around God are illuminated proportionate to their rank,¹⁶² thus linking the level of illumination (similarity to God) to their rank, and their rank is linked to their nature. God illuminates angels, and they illuminate others through their own illumination. How these ranks relate is not expanded upon, although Basil says angels exercise no rule over each other, since they all bow to God and His will.¹⁶³

It was from this background that Pseudo-Dionysius's classic and highly influential exposition of angelology came. Heavily influenced by Neo-Platonic cosmology, it is explained in *The Celestial Hierarchy*, and the uniqueness is not in that he talks of hierarchy, but that he arranges them in such a strict and systematic manner.¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁵ Cat. Lect. 23:6

¹⁵⁶ Hom. Gen 4:5

¹⁵⁷ Hom. in Evang. II:34

¹⁵⁸ A. Louth *Denys The Aeropagite* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1989) pp.36-7

¹⁵⁹ Origen: Matt. XII:16

¹⁶⁰ Greg. Naz. : Or. 28:31; Or. 40:5

¹⁶¹ Methodius: Ten Virgins VII:9

¹⁶² Greg. Naz.: Th. Or. II:31

¹⁶³ De Sp. Sanct. 20

¹⁶⁴ Louth p.36-7

He describes God as that which is fundamentally beyond human language, understanding and comprehension. Thus He cannot be accessed directly by fallen, limited man, but can only be met through layers of mediation and symbolic representation. This is part of long history of defining God in ever more distant terms,¹⁶⁵ and it is why angels are vital in constructing a cosmology where man can meet God. Due to the distance there is a hierarchy through which God works, a hierarchy being a sacred order, and a state of understanding, as well as an activity approximating as closely as possible to the divine. Through the hierarchy created beings are drawn to the imitation of God.¹⁶⁶ As with the Cappadocians, beings relate to God in proportion to the enlightenments given to them, and the goal of a hierarchy is to enable beings to be as like as possible to, and at one with, God. The hierarchy also allows beings to pass their illumination downward for the benefit of those below.¹⁶⁷ This idea provides the basis for Dionysius's angelology.

Angels are creations of God, immaterial beings of fire, brought into being by His goodness,¹⁶⁸ of enormous number,¹⁶⁹ and the higher up the hierarchy they are, the closer to God in their being and actions they are. Angels have a natural unfailing love for God, because they receive direct, divine enlightenment, and this enlightenment creates a life of total intelligence for them.¹⁷⁰ The role of the angels is to mediate the Unknowable God to men, by receiving illumination first, and then passing it

¹⁶⁵ Louth p.36

¹⁶⁶ CH III:1

¹⁶⁷ CH III:1-2, XV:2 c.f. Louth p.39

¹⁶⁸ CH IV:1

¹⁶⁹ CH XIV

¹⁷⁰ CH IV:2

downwards in an ever more mediated form.¹⁷¹ Although, he concedes that there might be more that are not revealed, Dionysius firmly cites the hierarchy as:

(I) Holy Thrones; Seraphim; Cherubim.

(II) Authorities; Dominions; Powers.

(III) Angels; Archangels; Principalities.

The First Hierarchy is the closest to God, standing round His Throne, and receiving the most direct and abundant enlightenment and illumination.¹⁷² Their names describe their characteristics - Seraphim means *carriers of fire*, Cherubim means *fullness of wisdom*, and Thrones describes the exaltation and closeness to God beyond the rest of Creation. All three groups are of equal rank.¹⁷³ They are pure and participate fully in the illumination of God, surpassing every other created being perfectly, and they have a Godlike property of an eternally unfailing, unmoved and completely uncontaminated foundation.¹⁷⁴ It is from this rank that men receive the Divine Liturgy, Hymns and the Triashagion, and this rank teaches and instructs the middle rank.¹⁷⁵

The middle rank consists of Dominions, Powers and Authorities. Dominions signify, a *lifting up* which is free of earthly tendencies, and without tyranny that characterises harsh dominion. Powers are masculine and unshakeably courageous in their godlike activities. Authorities are the source of all authority, and they create all authority, so they can receive God harmoniously and without confusion, which indicates the

¹⁷¹ CH IV:2

¹⁷² CH VII:3: Louth p.47

¹⁷³ CH VII:1

¹⁷⁴ CH VII:2

¹⁷⁵ CH VII:3

ordered nature of celestial and intellectual authority.¹⁷⁶ All three are of equal standing, and they manifest their conformity to God by receiving purification, illumination and perfection, *second-hand* from the first hierarchical rank.¹⁷⁷

Within the third rank, Principalities are godlike and princely, and they lead others to God.¹⁷⁸ Archangels have the same rank as Principalities, but since hierarchies must have a top, middle and bottom, Archangels are placed between Principalities and Angels. They are messengers like the angels, transmitting between the two ranks, and yet they are turned toward God in a princely fashion like the Principalities.¹⁷⁹ Angels complete the order, and they are more concerned with the affairs of the world and men.¹⁸⁰ The role of the lowest rank is to preside over the human hierarchies, so that men look toward God, and that communion and union will occur according to proper order. They are the final part of the process of illumination benignly given by God, and which arrives at each rank in a shared way, and in sacred harmony.¹⁸¹

While terms may be interchangeable, or less than clear sometimes, the hierarchies are accurately described. This means that only the lowest ranks minister directly to men. So, for example, although a seraphim is said to have purified Isaiah, what happened is that *seraph* means fire and cleansing, and this was the task that was accomplished. So the name *seraphim* describes the task, not the rank of the angel that did the task.¹⁸²

Theophanies occur by being mediated through the Hierarchy.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁶ CH VIII:1

¹⁷⁷ CH VIII:1-2

¹⁷⁸ CH IX:1

¹⁷⁹ CH IX:2

¹⁸⁰ CH IX:2

¹⁸¹ CH IX:2

¹⁸² CH XIII:1 c.f. P. Rorem *Pseudo-Dionysius* (OUP, 1993) p.70

¹⁸³ CH IV:3

On the other side of the coin, Augustine shows more caution in his approach, As with previous theologians, he envisages a hierarchy or order, that is purely of good angels, and from which none have fallen – which implies that hierarchies were instituted post angelic fall. ¹⁸⁴ There are names and ranks within this angelic society, although all share the general name *angel*. There are *archangels* (possibly also called *hosts*), *thrones*, *dominions*, *principalities* and *powers*. ¹⁸⁵ Centrally, though, there is no move to any form of investigative or speculative theology on his part:

What distinction there is among the ... names under which the Apostle seems to embrace the whole celestial company, ... to these questions let those reply who can, if, that is, they can prove their answers true; I acknowledge my own ignorance of these things. ¹⁸⁶

Augustine also said that while a hierarchy is used by God, He also sometimes chooses to act outside, and independently of, the hierarchy. ¹⁸⁷ Within the hierarchy, though, there is a working order. Angels do the will of God according to their nature, and the command of angels higher in the hierarchy. Angels can do certain things if the more powerful angels permit them, but there are things they cannot do even if more powerful angels allow them, since God has fixed the limits of the angelic nature – for example, they cannot create. ¹⁸⁸ Also, God sometimes does not allow angels to do things within their capabilities, even though they have the power to do so. ¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁴ En. 57

¹⁸⁵ En. 57-8 c.f. Creed I

¹⁸⁶ En. 58

¹⁸⁷ Aug.: De Trin. III:4

¹⁸⁸ Aug: De Civ. XII:25

¹⁸⁹ Aug.: De Trin. III:8-9

(2) Mediaeval Angelology

Introduction.

The Mediaeval period was characterised by scrutiny of issues surrounding angelology, and questions regarding their origin and operation, among other things, came to the fore. Patristic writers were scrutinised and defined until a basic agreement was found around the issues. Mediaeval angelology followed well-worn patterns with Peter Lombard setting the base line for how one would use Scripture and the Fathers, and while other thinkers placed slightly different emphases on certain issues, the fundamental system and conclusions remained the same.¹⁹⁰ Most issues came down to one of two or three possible positions, all of which were theologically credible and held by reputable thinkers.¹⁹¹ For these reasons I am focusing solely on Aquinas and Lombard, since their positions were not only close to each other, but also basically the same as all the other Scholastic writers. Any slight differences in approach, while of interest to scholars of mediaeval thought, need not bother us here since the Reformers essentially criticised the big picture and the big issues alone, never delving into the technicalities and differences that existed between the various Scholastic expositions of angelology.

¹⁹⁰ Rorem p.77; Parente p.112

¹⁹¹ E. Langton *Supernatural* (London: Rider & Co, 1934) pp.43-44, 52, 59

(A) Peter Lombard (1100-1160)¹⁹²

Peter Lombard's *Book of Sentences* was very influential on theological thought in the later Middle Ages. The section on angels is mainly in *Book II*, and it is here that we see the intense analysis of all aspects of angelology, which heavily influenced those who followed him. Of whatever scholastic persuasion particular thinkers may have been, their angelology often differed little from Lombard's fundamental base line.¹⁹³

To begin with, all rational creatures fall into two categories - incorporeal (angels) and corporeal (human) - and their creation originated in God's goodness. Both groups were created to praise, serve and enjoy God.¹⁹⁴ Using Augustine, Lombard sees men as being created to replace the demons lost in the angelic fall.¹⁹⁵ Regarding the moment of the angel's creation, he, after reviewing the various positions (that angels were created either prior to, or during, the Genesis account), decides in favour of the second position - that they were created alongside the rest of creation – and cites Augustine as an authority who advocated this position.¹⁹⁶ Angels, unformed matter and the empyrean (the heaven where the angels reside) were created, and God then spent the six days creating specific beings with the unformed matter.¹⁹⁷

Angels were created with four attributes; an indivisible and immaterial simple essence; distinct personalities; memory and choice; and freewill - the last two being

¹⁹² Information and references for this section: Langton and M.L. Colish *Peter Lombard: Vols I&II* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994)

¹⁹³ Langton p.59

¹⁹⁴ Patrologia Latina (Vol. 192) : *Works of Peter Lombard* Vol II: Bk II: Ch I: 4-6

¹⁹⁵ Bk II: Ch I:9

¹⁹⁶ Bk II: Ch II:2-5

¹⁹⁷ Bk II: Ch II:6

distinguished by the fact that choice means being active, non-robotic beings, and freewill means choosing between good and evil. ¹⁹⁸ Although angels were created equal they were not all created the same, but with differing gifts of grace from God. They are the same in that they are all simple, rational, immaterial and immortal persons. However, in terms of wisdom and will they differ. Also, some have more glorious forms than others, and some are more swift or agile than others. Some have greater natural gifts, and these preside over the lesser angels by God's grace. God's grace gives these angels wisdom and majesty. Thus there is a gradation in the angelic substance, and how they act within that given nature. ¹⁹⁹

Harking back to Augustine, Lombard asks if all angels were created good, or if some were created bad, and asks when they actually fell. Rejecting Augustine, he saw an interval between the creation and fall of Satan. Angels were created knowing three things - they were creatures; who had created them; and why He had created them. They also loved God and each other. They were created good and innocent, but not fully righteous, and during the interval they had the free choice to either sin or not to sin. ²⁰⁰ In their created state, angels had everything they ever needed, and the ability to stand, or fall – this was not imposed upon them by God. Those who turned to God were illuminated by God and given graces which made them righteous (*conversio*); those who turned from God (due to envy) were not made evil, but had God's grace removed from them, which made them unrighteous and unable to return to Him (*adversio*). Angels were also given grace to co-operate with and obey God (but they do not need the grace of justification as men do), and this process made the angels

¹⁹⁸ Bk II: Ch III:1

¹⁹⁹ Bk II: Ch III:2-3

²⁰⁰ Bk II: Ch III:4-8

blessed and unable to sin, but their freewill was not removed - their freewill was confirmed and perfected through grace. The removal of grace from the demons meant they could never be restored, and the confirmation of the holy angels ensured they would never fall. ²⁰¹ Once confirmed, angels do not lose their freewill, but have it so enhanced that they exercise it perfectly in order not to fall. ²⁰²

The physical form of angels is also much discussed by Lombard. He accepts the same broad line as given by Augustine, that they are incorporeal, not joined to a body, but they can assume bodies (prepared by God) in order to appear to men. Once their mission is accomplished, they lose the body, but what happens to it then is a mystery. He also accepts that God uses angels in order to appear in theophanies. ²⁰³ Once this has been discussed, Lombard expounds upon the angelic hierarchy, and his vision is very similar to that expressed in Dionysius. He accepts the same nine-fold order, with three groups of three orders, in three ranked orders - highest, middle, lowest. An order is a group of celestial beings who are created like each other, and who have similar gifts of grace, as well as natural gifts, and Lombard follows Dionysius in the names and designations of the orders. ²⁰⁴ The question is then asked whether these orders existed before the Fall, and whether the demons who fell, fell from the nine orders. He concedes that some do believe that the orders were created before the Fall, and Scripture suggests this, but Lombard holds that they were created after the Fall since the highest orders (Cherubim and Seraphim) by their very name and character are too close to God to fall. ²⁰⁵ Scriptural evidence describes positions that the demons would have held if they had not fallen, not the positions they did actually hold. Lombard

²⁰¹ Bk II: Ch V

²⁰² Bk II: Ch VII:1-4

²⁰³ Bk II: Ch VIII:1-3

²⁰⁴ Bk II: Ch IX:2-3

rejects talk of a possible tenth order - the elect humans - who will make up the heavenly ranks. Regarding Dionysius' idea that only lower orders of angels are sent to minister to men and to the world, Lombard asserts that Isaiah 6 says that Seraphim were sent, and Hebrews 1:14 says that *all angels are ministering spirits*, so all are sent. However, he concedes that the higher orders are very rarely sent, the lower order doing the majority of the ministry to the world.²⁰⁶ Lombard also firmly believed in Guardian Angels who looked after and guided individual Christians throughout their lives, but he also adds the idea that an angel can be deputed to protect a group of men.²⁰⁷ Each believer also has a demon to mislead, test or discipline the soul. Guardian Angels can protect groups as well as individuals, so there need not be the exact number of humans, angels and demons in the world at one time.

The issue of whether angels are passible or not was recognised by Lombard as a difficult one, since the angelic nature was seen as impassible once confirmed in God. This is important because only God is truly impassible, and if angels were too, then the distinct and unique nature of God would be compromised. However, God's confirmation must be perfect and full which means angels must be impassible, yet he feels he has to cite something in angels that does change in order for it not be an impassibility of the same order as God. Therefore, Lombard concludes that angels grow in understanding and joy throughout their existence, and will be completed in this on the Judgement Day - the completion being so full that increase or decrease would be impossible.²⁰⁸ They were not confirmed in perfection, with no further ability to change since they live within the framework of time, have no

²⁰⁵ Bk II: Ch IX:5

²⁰⁶ Bk II: Ch X:1-6

²⁰⁷ Bk II: Ch XI:1-3

²⁰⁸ Bk II: Ch XI:4-7

foreknowledge, and can learn and grow in knowledge as history progresses. However, their knowledge of God and their contemplation of Him is unchanging, since they have been fully confirmed in Him. They cannot grow in love and merit, but they grow in how they use them. Thus Lombard holds a balance between the sole impassibility of God, and the impassibility given by God to the angels when He confirmed them in their positions.

(B) Thomas Aquinas (c. 1227-1274)

Thomas Aquinas' angelology is detailed and exhaustive, using a vast range of sources, and is as comprehensive as any before or since. His final position is similar to that of Lombard, yet he does have his own distinctives.²⁰⁹ It is also worth noting his heavy use of the Fathers, especially Dionysius, and the Cappadocians, as well as the explicit use of Aristotle in his methodology.²¹⁰ Aristoteleanism is important as it underpins his angelology with a teleological emphasis - that angels were created with a specific God given purpose and goal to work toward as the reason for their very existence.²¹¹ This idea will be picked up by others thinkers later in this study and fully expounded upon there. For now, it will just be noted. His teaching on angels is contained in Part I of

²⁰⁹ Rorem p.77

²¹⁰ M. Fahey & J. Meyendorff *Trinitarian Theology East and West* (Massachusetts: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1986) pp.15-17 c.f. Rorem p.77 & Langton p.52

²¹¹ Talking of how Aquinas viewed the universe, Brown writes: *Everything is in motion and in a state of transition between potentiality and actuality*. C. Brown *Philosophy And The Christian Faith* (London: Tyndale Press, 1971) p.27. Again, Gaarder said of Aristoteleanism that: *Substance always contained the potentiality to realise a specific form. Substance always strives toward achieving an innate potentiality. Every change in nature is a transformation of substance from the potential to the actual ... There is a purpose behind everything in nature*. J. Gaarder *Sophie's World* (London: Orion Books, 1995) p.85, 87

his *Summa Theologiae*, mainly in the two sections *Treatise on the Angels* and *On the Divine Government*.

Angels are incorporeal creatures of vast number, ranking between God and man, and they do not possess form or matter, but are pure form.²¹² They are intellectual creatures to be perceived by the intellect alone, yet the human intellect cannot fully behold or comprehend them.²¹³ Their nature is incorruptible, but only due to their *first cause*, God.²¹⁴ They do not possess bodies, even though they can assume bodies for the purpose of accomplishing missions to earth. These bodies are not identical to human bodies, but look as if they are, and are only for their manifestation.²¹⁵ Even though they do not have bodies as such, they can be said to be in a single place.²¹⁶ They are not omnipresent, having to move from one position to another, but this is so fast as to be instantaneous.²¹⁷

Angels have intellect, will, experience and memory, but since they have no bodies can only know through intellectual activity, not sensual experience or touch.²¹⁸ Angels do not know all things, and God gives to them what they do know. The higher up the angelic hierarchy they are, the more they know.²¹⁹ While angels can know God through their own faculties, like man, this is very limited and God needs to intervene by His grace to enlighten them. Angels can know as men know, but in a more perfect

²¹² B. Davies *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992) p. 55

²¹³ S.T. 1a:L – A:1-3 c.f. E. Gilson *A History of Christian Philosophy* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1955) p.224

²¹⁴ S.T. 1a:L – A:5

²¹⁵ S.T. 1a:LI – A:1-3

²¹⁶ S.T. 1a:LII – A:1-2

²¹⁷ S.T. 1a:LIII – A:1-3

²¹⁸ S.T. 1a:LIV – A:1-5

²¹⁹ S.T. 1a:LV – A:1-3

way. (By God's grace, angels have knowledge inherently within their nature, whereas men do not, but have the ability to learn.) They cannot see the future, nor read minds, but do have great insight, but despite this great insight, God still needs to teach them of His ways and His mysteries.²²⁰ Angels cannot be in falsehood, error or deception, since they perceive the essence of an object and do not judge it, which also means angels do not need to deduce or reason, but they know perfectly, instantly.²²¹ Following Augustine, Aquinas holds to morning and evening knowledge of angels, in terms of angels growing in understanding.²²² Angels have will, and freewill, but of a higher perfection than that within men.²²³ Lastly, angels have a natural love, and where they choose to love, and they love God more than themselves with this love.²²⁴

Moving on to the angelic creation, Aquinas says that Genesis doesn't discuss this, but agrees with Augustine that they were created as a part of *light*. As with Lombard he highlights the two possible positions around their creation - that angels were created before the corporeal world, or at the same time.²²⁵ Aquinas, following Lombard, goes for the second option, but states that great men (Gregory of Nazianzus) have accepted the first, so it is not to be held as heretical or incorrect.²²⁶ (This attitude pervades his angelology, that variety need not be equated to heresy, just difference on a subject difficult for men to fully apprehend.) Agreeing with Lombard, he states that angels were created in the highest, or empyrean, heaven.²²⁷ Angels were created with a natural blessedness, and with the capability of receiving more, but they require God's

²²⁰ S.T. 1a:LVII – A:1-5

²²¹ Gilson pp.248-9

²²² S.T. 1a:LVIII – A:1-7

²²³ S.T. 1a:LIX – A:1-4

²²⁴ S.T. 1a:LX – A:1-5

²²⁵ S.T. 1a:LXI – A:1-2

²²⁶ S.T. 1a:LXI – A:3

²²⁷ S.T. 1a:LXI – A:4

grace to possess the fullness of the Beatific Vision.²²⁸ They have freewill and they are able to sin just as any other rational being - the angelic fall being caused by Satan seeking his own good, by his own will and not God's grace, in opposition to God's will, and then drawing others into his sin. Again, agreeing with Lombard, Aquinas saw an interval between the angelic creation and their fall, since it would imply a fault in God's creative act if their first action was to sin, but accepts the other opinion is a reasonable, if flawed, option.²²⁹ However, once beatified (confirmed by God) angels cannot sin and live in the fullness of their nature, and demons cannot be saved.²³⁰

Moving on to *On Divine Government*, Aquinas follows Dionysius and sees angels as ranked and arranged in an ascending hierarchy, with the most superior angels in nature standing closest to God and being directly illuminated by Him. The angels lower down the hierarchy receive illumination from those above, as those above receive and then tailor the illumination to the lower angels capabilities, but they always strive to illuminate as much as nature will allow - never hiding the illumination they receive. The lower angels never illuminate the higher. To illuminate is to not change one's will – only God can change the angelic will.²³¹ This illumination eventually comes to the world, and angels pass down knowledge, law and science to men.

The speech of angels is an issue that interests Aquinas, and he develops Augustine's simple outline. He says that it is not necessary for them to speak, but St Paul talks of the tongues of angels, so angels must speak in some sense. Since they have no body

²²⁸ S.T. 1a:LXII – A:1-2

²²⁹ S.T. 1a:LXIII – A:1-9

²³⁰ S.T. 1a:LXII – A:8 c.f. 1a:LXIV:1-4; B.J. Lonergan *Grace And Freedom* (Darton, Longman & Todd, 1970) p.42, 53-4; Gilson p.225

they cannot speak as humans speak, but they can speak by passing thoughts directly from mind to mind - what Aquinas calls interior speech. Since it is an intellectual operation, distance, time and place are not issues with angelic speech, but that does not mean that all angels can hear all other angels speaking. The angel who talks can determine the scope of who hears. Unlike illumination, lower angels can speak to higher angels. Angels can also talk to God, but they do not give Him information, but consult Him and praise Him.²³²

Aquinas accepts the Dionysian scheme with little variation. He makes clear the point that man's knowledge of the angels is imperfect, so angelic offices and orders can be distinguished only in a general way. The distinctions between the orders are by God's grace within the angels, not of themselves or their own nature.²³³ There are three threefold orders, and the diversity of the orders derives from the diversity of role and action. This reflects real life as you have a summit, a middle and a base in society - nobles, commoners and all those in between. His descriptions of the nine orders don't differ substantially from Dionysius, but he admits the Fathers do not unanimously teach this classification. Orders will, in one sense, cease once Christ has returned because one function of the hierarchy is to lead men to salvation, and this will become redundant, but the angelic role of illumination to those below will continue. By God's power and grace men, not by nature alone, can become equal to the angels, and so they probably are taken into the angelic hierarchy.²³⁴ Aquinas, also rejecting the idea that

²³¹ S.T. 1a:CVI – A:1-4; O.J. Brown *Natural Rectitude and Divine Law in Aquinas* (Ontario, 1981) pp.141-5

²³² S.T. 1a:CVII – A:1-5

²³³ S.T. 1a:CVIII – A:1-4

²³⁴ S.T. 1a:CVIII – A:5-8

the fallen angels have a hierarchy and for similar reasons, says that angels rule and control the demons.²³⁵

For Aquinas, all corporeal things are ruled by angels, and he finds support for this in both the Fathers (e.g. Augustine, Gregory of Nazianzus and Origen) and Platonist philosophy, since as *inferior angels are ruled by superior angels, so corporeal things are ruled by the angels*. They do not have direct control, but they mediate from God, and this can be manifested by angels moving physical beings. The question whether angels can work miracles is answered by defining a miracle as that which is done outside the natural order, and that, properly defined, only God can work miracles. However, since angels have powers and abilities beyond the comprehension of man, it can appear that they work outside the natural order and so work miracles (as can holy men), even though, strictly speaking, they do not.²³⁶

Just as superior angels enlighten and illuminate inferior angels, so men are enlightened by the inferior angels, since they cannot receive direct illumination from God, and this is by using methods perceptible by the human senses, since men cannot receive "*unveiled*" illumination. The angelic intellect is able to work on and strengthen men's intellect in order to give them greater revelations of God, and angels can also act upon the will of men by persuasion and by rousing passions, but angels cannot directly change a man's will. They can also act upon the human imagination and change human senses. However, it is not only the good angels who can do this, evil angels too can manipulate men.²³⁷

²³⁵ S.T. 1a:CIX – A:1-4

²³⁶ S.T. 1a:CX – A:1-4

²³⁷ S.T. 1a:CXI – A:1-4 c.f. 1a:CXVI – A:1-4 ; Brown pp.145-8

God sends angels to minister to men, and although the action is ultimately from God, driven by His grace, it is mediated through the hierarchy of angels until it reaches man. As to whether all angels minister to man, Aquinas adapts both Dionysius and Lombard, saying that the highest orders of angels (Thrones, Cherubim, Seraphim and Dominions) are not sent, but the lower five are.²³⁸

This clearly leads on to the concept of Guardian Angels, and Aquinas very strongly believes in this, as it is *fitting* to do so. Using Jerome, he says that while God does in a general sense protect all humans, and gives both grace and virtue directly into the soul of the individual Christian, and He also provides protection and enlightenment and guidance through angels. Man can resist and be led astray, but this is not the fault of the angel, but due to man's sin. Every man (*without exception*) has a Guardian Angel through which God acts, but Aquinas feels that different angels are given to different people, but they always come from the lowest order of angels. (He also holds to national Guardian Angels alongside individual Guardian Angels, who exercise guardianship over the whole human race - and these are probably either Archangels or Principalities.) Guardian Angels stay with their appointed human, be they righteous or a sinner, until their death, and then they will either share their joy together in heaven, or else the demon will punish the person in hell. Aquinas, aware of the debate on when Guardian Angels are appointed, decides in favour of them being given at birth, as opposed to at baptism. Guardian Angels never abandon men, but this does not mean that they will protect them from every kind of trial or sin. It does mean that angels can be with a man at every point of his life if necessary, but they never grieve over what

²³⁸ S.T. 1a: CXII – A:1-4 c.f. Lonergan p.122

happens to their charge, since they forever enjoy the beatific vision, and are eternally full of joy. Guardian Angels do not stop a person sinning (as this is their own freewill), nor do they punish sin, but follow the will of God for the person to allow trial and castigation. Finally, Aquinas says that there is no conflict between the angels since all follow God's will - the conflict between angels in Daniel 10:13 is explained by the fact that God had not told the angels in question everything they needed to know. Thus it was a misunderstanding of sorts, not a conflict.²³⁹

We can see therefore, that through the work of Lombard and Aquinas, the variation of opinions and positions in Patristic angelology had become much more regularised and systematised, and it was this that provided the basis for mediaeval angelology, and was generally this that the Reformers criticised.

²³⁹ S.T. 1a: CXIII – A:1-7

Chapter 3

ANGELOLOGY IN LATE MEDIEVAL ENGLAND (from c. 1350-1547)

Introduction.

England had a long history of devotion to angels. From the time when Pope Gregory the Great made his famous *Non Angli sed Angeli* quip, the Cult of Michael the Archangel had been especially popular.¹ Bede mentions dedications of churches in Wiltshire, Gloucester and Sussex, and St. Wilfred having a vision of Michael at his death – visions being commemorated, for example, by St Michael's Mount in Cornwall to honour an 8th century vision. Michael was the patron of cemeteries, and by the Reformation, the number of churches in England dedicated to Michael numbered 686. Michael was usually depicted, either sword in hand slaying a dragon, or with scales in hand weighing the souls of the dead. By comparison, churches dedicated to Gabriel numbered only six,² and none to any other archangels, although Edmund Lacey, Bishop of Exeter (1420-55), wrote an office in Raphael's honour.³

Important to popular religion were its roots, or inherited tradition. Gray writes:

¹ Ed. F.L. Cross & E.A. Livingstone *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (OUP, 1993) p.301 – from now on cited as ODCC.

² Ibid p.173

³ Ibid p.367

The Middle Ages inherited an impressive and complex *imaginary museum*, the fruit of twelve centuries of Christian tradition - hymns, religious poetry, commentaries, sermons, and, of course, the Scriptures, the Psalter and the Western liturgy.⁴

This rich religious tradition could be articulated through literature, drama, and liturgy. What follows, again, is not a comprehensive overview, but more a targeted selection which will highlight how traditions surrounding angels were espoused in a popular context. It will also look at how the early reformers like Luther and Tyndale approached the subject, and how these influences affected the reformed Catholicism developed under Henry VIII.

(1) Literature, Drama and Lyric.

(A) Literature.

In William Langland's *Piers the Plowman* (c. 1390), Piers sees an angel addressing a field of people. It *spoke loudly in Latin*, as a sign of authority,⁵ and told the King to rule wisely, but the angel was rejected. Elsewhere, Piers buys an Indulgence that invoked the presence of *Saint Michael Mine Angel* to protect his soul from demons, comfort his soul at death, and lead it to heaven.⁶ In Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (c. 1380s), *The Second Nun's Tale* is based on the life of Saint Cecelia, who, through the direction of her Guardian Angel, persuades her husband (Valerian) to live in celibacy.

⁴ D. Gray *Themes and Images in the Medieval English Lyric* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972) p.3

⁵ Trans. W. Skeat *Langland's Piers the Plowman* (London: Chatto & Windass Publishers, 1907): Prologue 128-130

⁶ Ibid VII:33-36

Violation of this oath meant death. Valerian converted and then met the angel, who also converted his brother Tiburce. However, they were martyred, after which their executioner had a vision of angels and he too converted, and converted many others.⁷ Thus we see an angelic ministry which includes Guardian Angels, invocation of angels, angelic protection and their exacting of judgement, angels converting men, and angels leading souls to heaven.

(B) Drama and Mystery Plays.

Plays and dramas were popular, and reflected what the average person may have known about angels. The *Chester Mystery Plays* (c. 1375)⁸ were performed by local people, and there was a *certain amount of theological exposition* involved.⁹ In *The Fall of Lucifer*, the Dionysian hierarchy is described, with *all angels* around God's throne to serve and worship Him. Lucifer tries to seduce the angels out of their hierarchy to follow him, a position contrary to the scholastic idea that God instituted the hierarchy after the Fall.¹⁰ In *Christ's Ascension*, echoing Patristic tradition, angels greet Christ as He arrives in heaven, but don't immediately recognise Him, and are shocked by His blood-soaked clothing. However, Christ re-assures them by saying that His suffering enabled the salvation of mankind.¹¹ The angels then return to earth to re-assure Peter and Andrew that Christ would return. In *Antichrist* Michael confronts and kills Satan, after which he leads Elijah and Enoch to heaven - an interesting choice

⁷ Texts used: N. Coghill *The Canterbury Tales* (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1951); Ed. A. Burgess *The Riverside Chaucer* (Oxford University Press, 1987)

⁸ Ed. M. Hussey *The Chester Mystery Plays* (London: Heinemann, 1960): In the Chester cycle we have the prototype of the English mystery plays in their pure form. (Sleeve notes.)

⁹ Ibid. p. xiv

¹⁰ Lombard: Sent. II:IX:5; Aquinas S.T. 1a:CIX:A 1-4

¹¹ See p.49 above.

since these two men did not die but were taken up to heaven alive.¹² Finally, in *The Last Judgement* angels gather the souls of *Christ's number*. While it is clearly simplified, these plays show an angelology with strong Patristic overtones - Dionysian hierarchies, angelic guidance and reassurance of men, the heavenly court, angelic ignorance of Christ's mission, and angels gathering up and then leading souls to heaven. In other plays, Biblical stories were adapted and shaped by liturgical tradition,¹³ and were usually an embellishment of Scripture.¹⁴ For example, angels turned Mary Magdalene from her evil ways,¹⁵ and warned the Magi of Herod's evil plans.¹⁶ Sometimes the idea that the Star of Bethlehem was an angelic being arose, indicating an influence by a patristic tradition similar to Origen.¹⁷ Plays also reflected traditions surrounding the Virgin Mary, such as angelic visions in her youth, and angels meeting her in the Temple.¹⁸ Apocryphal accounts, such as *Bel and the Dragon*, were also popular.¹⁹

(C) Lyrics and Poetry.

Because of the nativity story, Gabriel and Mary were seen to have a close relationship which meant they were often invoked together in lyrical prayers.²⁰ A common theme in the interpretations of the Angelic Salutation was the method of conception. When

¹² c.f. Gen. 5:24; II Kings 2:11

¹³ K. Young *The Drama of the Medieval Church Vol I & II* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933) c.f. II:82

¹⁴ Ibid I:301; I:229; II:45; I:240

¹⁵ Ibid I:533

¹⁶ Ibid II:1-12; II:34; II:45

¹⁷ Ibid II:30-1 A. Scott *Origen and the Life Of The Stars* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991) pp.140-2

¹⁸ Ibid II:225; II:227; II:242

¹⁹ Ibid II:287

²⁰ Ibid II:156-157

Gabriel is pictured whispering in Mary's ear, and Christ (the Word) enters her, conception through the ear sometimes becomes strangely literal:

When Gabriel greeted her, and whispered in her ear,
In blissful time Christ was born, our Saviour she bore.

Also:

Blessed be, Lady, your right ear:
The Holy Ghost, he alighted in there.
Flesh and blood to take.²¹

Angels were also invoked at death, Michael being a common figure on Church murals about death.²² There were also a number of religious poems and prayers, dating from around 1400, reflecting popular beliefs in angels. *To the Good Angel* shows a wide range of angelic ministry, where they *save, defend and govern, cleanse the soul from sin, and guide men Godward*. They are *ever abiding* with men, even in death. and one is exhorted to devoutly pray to their angel to *govern my acts and thoughts in fear*. We see the role of the Guardian Angel (who is prayed to) cleansing, guiding and protecting souls.²³ Elsewhere, an early 16th century sung prayer, *Unto the Angels*, tells men to pray so their angel will *my vices all to virtues change*, and so that *Saint Gabriel and Raphael with you, all archangels and angels, will be my defence and help in every fear*. And in *Unto the Proper Angels*, the Guardian Angel and the

²¹ Gray op. cit, pp.100-101

²² Ibid p182, 195-197

²³ Ed. R. Dyboski *Songs, Carols & Miscellaneous Poems* (London: Kegan Paul, 1908) p.51

whole Dionysian hierarchy is asked *to help me resist anger, sloth and pride and of all seven that may not abide.* ²⁴

(2) Angelology in Late Medieval English Mystical Writers

Richard Rolle (c 1300 - 1349) was a popular, influential but much criticised, mystical writer. In *Ego Dormio*, Rolle demonstrates a clear knowledge of the Dionysian model. He states the nine orders in the threefold form, but whereas Dionysius' main simile for angels is fire, Rolle prefers light, with each rank being brighter than the previous, lower one. Rolle stresses that knowledge of the angelic hierarchy enables men to have *companionship* with angels. ²⁵ Elsewhere, he states one is to pray and praise together with angels. ²⁶ More interesting is his idea that salvation means entering into the angelic hierarchy, and that men can reach the highest reaches of the hierarchy. For Rolle, just as seraphim means *burning*, so to their order are *admitted those who want least from this world (and) have hearts which are most burning in (God's) love.* ²⁷ One can *with angels take your seat* in God's presence, and this is for *simple men and women*, not just the spiritual elite. ²⁸ Finally, in opposition to Lombard and Aquinas, and similar to popular ideas in mystery plays, Rolle suggests that demons fell from an already existing hierarchy, since he talks of men and women entering the ranks that the demons vacated. ²⁹

²⁴ Ibid p.63

²⁵ Trans. & Ed. R.S. Allen *Richard Rolle : The English Writings* (SPCK, 1981) p.133

²⁶ *Song of Mercy* : Ibid p.187

²⁷ *Ego Dormio* : Ibid p.134

²⁸ *A Song of the Love of Jesus - Pt. II* : Ibid p.190 c.f. *Ego Dormio* p.133

²⁹ *Richard Rolle* p.134 c.f. Lombard: Sent. II :IX:5; Aquinas S.T. 1a:CIX:A 1-4

Walter Hilton (c. 1343-1396) powerfully restated orthodox Catholicism against Wyclif.³⁰ His major work is the *Scale of Perfection*, where the Patristic theme of good and bad angels pulling men in opposite directions plays a major part.³¹ All good feelings come from the good angel, and evil thoughts come from the demon disguised as an angel of light.³² Angels appear in bodily form to comfort, teach and manifest God's blessings, but one must discern whether the angel is good or bad.³³ Angels bring to mind:

The words and insights of holy scripture, unsought and unconsidered, one after another, and readily expounds them, however hard or secret they may be.³⁴

Hilton also shows a knowledge of Dionysius, and many of the finer points of scholastic angelology, talking of:

... their dignity by nature; the subtlety of their substance, their confirmation in grace, the fullness of their eternal glory, the diversity of their orders and the distinction of their persons; how they all live in the light of eternal truth, and how they all burn in love of the Holy Spirit according to the dignity of their orders.³⁵

³⁰ Trans. J.Clark & R. Dorward *Walter Hilton : The Scale of Perfection* (New York: Paulist Press, 1991) p.3 (c.f. Scale: I:58)

³¹ c.f. Greg. Nyssa: Life of Moses 2:52-53

³² Scale I:10

³³ I:11

³⁴ II:43

³⁵ II:46

In terms reminiscent of Origen, men's souls have a close relationship with their angel, and the angel responds with all the care, help and teaching needed, and drives demons away, which moves the man's soul toward illumination. Such a ministry strongly implies a mediating role between God and man, and Hilton doesn't shrink from this. With the help of angels the soul can *gaze upon the blessed nature of Jesus himself, for knowledge of creatures lends to a knowledge of the Creator, and the soul begins to perceive a little of the mysteries of the blessed Trinity*. Thus the ultimate goal of all angelic ministry and angelology is to point people to Christ and the Trinity.³⁶

In *On Angel's Song*,³⁷ Hilton says that God gives the soul comfort directly, but also through means like Angel's Song, which *is spiritual and above all imagination and reason*, and a gift only for the soul purified by the love of God, and illuminated by wisdom. It enables the soul to *behold spiritual things, virtues and angels, holy souls and heavenly things*, and to be touched and taught. Yet Hilton strikes a word of warning saying that whoever hears the angel's song must ensure they are not self-deceived, or deceived by *illusion of the enemy*. Angel's Song can mislead men into spiritual pride and arrogance, and to focus on angels and not on Christ, which is why Hilton affirms the necessity of the Church to men. Hilton ends the letter with an Augustinian caveat of caution and ignorance - he is not going to commit himself to anything that he is unsure of, and advocates only what he knows is clear.

³⁶ II:46

³⁷ Ed. B. Windeatt *English Mystics of the Middle Ages* (Cambridge University Press, 1994) pp.131-136

The *Cloud of Unknowing* (c. 1400) was heavily influenced by Dionysian spirituality,³⁸ yet the writings show little of how that shaped his angelology. For example, following the Fathers and Scholastics, the *Cloud Author* sees that all bodily things are subject to, and ruled by a corresponding spiritual beings, but this is not extended into any discussion of hierarchies or Guardian Angels.³⁹ *Cloud* does say that angels are *knowing beings*, who can love and know God, as men can, but he goes little further than this.⁴⁰ The main point to note is *Cloud's* warning people not to assume they are angelic.⁴¹ The statement itself is difficult to unravel, and perhaps is addressing a problem he has seen. However, the first translator of *The Cloud* into Latin, Richard Methley (c. 1491), added a gloss at this point,⁴² which suggests people thought that they could become equal to the angels by assuming an angelic nature. Methley admonishes that one should focus on being saved as a human, yet should be guided by the angelic example. One should not despise the human nature and look to be an angel, but transform the human nature to its full potential by God's grace. For a man to truly know God, all creatures, angels included, must come under *the cloud of forgetting*, and while it may be *very profitable* to study angels, giving a sort of spiritual light, it is nothing compared with contemplation of God.⁴³

In Julian of Norwich's (1342-1423) writings,⁴⁴ angelology is notable by its absence, although she clearly knows of Dionysius and scholastic debates in other areas.⁴⁵ All

³⁸ E. Underhill *The Cloud of Unknowing* (London: John Watkins, 1922) pp.9-10; Ed. J. Walsh *The Cloud of Unknowing* (SPCK, 1981) p. xiv-xvi; p.47ff

³⁹ Walsh p.61

⁴⁰ *Cloud* Chpt. IV

⁴¹ Walsh p.242

⁴² *Cloud* Chpt. LXII – cited in footnote, Ed. J. Walsh.

⁴³ *Cloud* Chpt. V

⁴⁴ Text used: Trans. E. Colledge *Julian of Norwich : Showings* (New York: Paulist Press, 1978)

⁴⁵ Ed. P. Chambers *Revelations of Divine Love* (London: Methuen & Co, 1949) p. xliii

she says is that angelic activity is controlled and limited by God,⁴⁶ angels can manifest themselves to humans, and angels can communicate with men.⁴⁷ Again, as with Julian and the *Cloud Author*, Margery Kempe (c.1373 – c.1439) says little about angels; the only reference of note is where she quotes Jesus in a vision explaining to her how He comforts men, and that His angels were *ready to offer your holy thoughts and your prayers* to Him.⁴⁸

(3) Angelology in the Sarum Missal.

Introduction

During the 15th and early 16th century England had three main Rites (Sarum, York and Hereford - Hereford being little used), but the Sarum Rite was the most widely used. Cuming writes that:

The differences between the Sarum and York books are of interest only to specialists. ... The overwhelming predominance of Sarum shows that, well before the Reformation, *all the whole realm* was very close to having *but one use*.⁴⁹

Hope says: The *Use of Sarum* in the latter Middle Ages became increasingly influential throughout England, Wales and Ireland. Indeed in 1543 the use of the Sarum Breviary was imposed on the whole of the southern Province, and it

⁴⁶ Chpt. 13 (Long Text); Chpt. 65 (LT)

⁴⁷ Chapter 25 : Short Text; Chapter 76: (LT)

⁴⁸ W. Butler-Bowden *The Book of Margery Kempe* (London: Alden Press, 1936): Chpt. 65

⁴⁹ G.J. Cuming *A History of Anglican Liturgy* (London, MacMillan Press Ltd, 1982) p.14 c.f. E. Yarnold & J. Fisher *The West from about 500AD to the Reformation* in C. Jones et al (eds.) *The Study of Liturgy* (SPCK, 1993) p.150

was from the books of the Sarum Rite that the architects of the First Prayer Book of Edward VI took most of their material. On the eve of the Reformation, the output of Sarum books was enormous, in itself, indicating the position, influence and importance of this rite in England.⁵⁰

Therefore I focus on Sarum for two reasons. First that it (or Rites very similar to it) was the dominant Rite in use in England, and that it would probably have been impressed upon the religious psyche of the vast majority of English people. Second, it fed strongly into the Prayer Books of Edward VI's reign, and so influenced the shaping of Anglican thought of later years. In addition to this, Sarum also highlights how certain aspects of angelology had developed, for example the inclusion of Michael, Gabriel and Raphael into the Cult of Saints, and their mediating role between God and men.

The contents of the Sarum Missal can be subdivided as follows:⁵¹

- (i) The Kalender - Liturgical Year and Feasts.
- (ii) Ordinary and Canon of the Mass.
- (iii) Proper of Seasons.
- (iv) Common of Saints.
- (v) Votive Masses.
- (vi) Various Services.
- (vii) Proper of Saints.

⁵⁰ P. M. Hope & G. Woolfenden *The Mediaeval Western Rites* in C. Jones et al (eds.) *The Study of Liturgy* (SPCK, 1993) p.280

⁵¹ Text used: Trans. F.E. Warren *The Sarum Missal in English (Vol. I & II)* (London: A.R. Mowbray & Co, 1913) – all italics used throughout are mine.

For the purpose of this study, the areas of most importance are the *Various Services* and the *Proper of Saints*, therefore I will briefly cover the first areas before focusing on the last two.

(A) The Sarum Missal: Sections (i) – (v)

In both the *Kalender* and *Mass*, little is of interest besides mentioning the worship of angels in heaven, and the presentation of prayers to God by angels.⁵² The *Proper Of Seasons* has a few noteworthy points. For example, on *The Innocents' Day* angels welcome the martyred children into heaven, echoing the Patristic idea of angels shepherding souls to, and welcoming souls into, heaven.⁵³

More in tune with angels as a part of the Cultus, on the Easter Even is a form of Litany which starts:

Holy Michael, pray for us.

Holy Gabriel, pray for us.

Holy Raphael, pray for us.

All ye holy Angels and Archangels of God, pray for us.⁵⁴

Just before the Easter Mass, as a part of the blessing of the water in the Font, the choir sang another Litany invoking angelic orders, saints and holy men to pray to God.⁵⁵

⁵² I:40-41

⁵³ I:111-12 e.g. Basil: Hom. 19:9; See p.41 above.

⁵⁴ I:277-80

Further, on the Thursday after Easter the *Lesson* was Acts 8:26-40, where an angel takes Philip to convert the Ethiopian Official, followed by a *Sequence* based on Matthew 28, where an angel tells Mary not to be afraid and to go and give the news that Christ had been raised. This shows angels giving revelation (*mysteries*) and physical assistance in order to promote the Great Commission.⁵⁶

Some of the *Votive Masses* also contain points of interest. Usually said on a Monday, the *Mass of the Angels*⁵⁷ has a *Collect* which asks:

Grant the perpetual help of thy mercy, O Lord, unto us, whom thou hast granted not to lack the ministrations of angels.

This is followed by two Bible readings, Revelation 19:9-10 that contains the admonishment *Do not worship me!*, and the second is the Healing at the Pool of Bethesda (John 5:1-4) - a sequence of verses suggesting that it was necessary to stress an angel's rightful place below God, despite its apparently miraculous ministry. Following this, one asks for *the intercession and intervention of angels on our behalf*, after which the post-communion prayer says:

Having been fulfilled, O Lord, with thy heavenly benediction, we humbly beseech thee that the service which we celebrate in weakness, may by the aid of holy angels and archangels, and of all the heavenly spirits, be perceptibly profitable to us.

⁵⁵ I:284-5

⁵⁶ I:305

⁵⁷ II:55-7

Fascinatingly, this suggests that angels make the Mass efficacious to man - a development of the Patristic ideas.⁵⁸

Celebrated on Fridays, the *Mass of the Holy Cross* was based on the *Mass of the Five Wounds* of St. Boniface. This Mass grew from the tradition where Boniface was close to death, so God sent Raphael with the Mass, which Boniface was to record, and say five times, after which he would be healed. Raphael said that any priest who said it five times for either himself or another sick person would:

... receive health and grace, and shall hereafter possess life eternal, if he perseveres in good. ... If it be said on behalf of the soul of a deceased person, directly after it has been said completely, that is to say, five times, that soul shall be freed from punishment.⁵⁹

The point of interest here is that Raphael was able to give revelation direct from God, and becomes a medium for God's giving new revelations, liturgies and Masses

Another Votive Mass revolved around the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the main point to note is the promotion of Gabriel from an angel to an archangel - *No one lower in grade to the virgin is sent, but an archangel dread, mighty Gabriel* – a promotion nowhere indicated by Scripture.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ John Chrys: Hom. Eph. 1:3; Adv. Anom 3-4; See pp.46-7 above.

⁵⁹ Information on the Mass in footnotes on II:64-5. Whether this is Boniface VIII (1294-1303) or IX (1389 - 1404) is unclear.

⁶⁰ II:78ff

(B) The Sarum Missal : Various Services & The Proper of Saints

The angelology of the *Various Services* is important since it is here that the Missal demonstrates a development of angelic ministry. The *Order of Matrimony* refers to the Apocryphal story of Tobias and Sarah, where an angel appears to Tobias (but Tobias does not know it is an angel, and calls him Azarias) and, after a journey, arranges the marriage of Tobias with Sarah. On their wedding night, Raphael fights and defeats a demonic attack upon Tobias and Sarah.⁶¹ Again, in a time when The Plague and other sicknesses were a constant threat, the *Mass To Turn Away Pestilence*, makes it clear that it was angels sent by God to exact judgement upon sinners, but it was God who could command them to cease their destructive activity.⁶²

The *Service for Pilgrims*, reminiscent of the tradition of Basil,⁶³ invokes angelic protection for those going on a journey, and the final *Collect* says:

May (God) send his angel Raphael to be your guardian in your pilgrimage; to conduct you on your way, in peace, to the place whither you would go, and to bring you back again in safety on your return to us.⁶⁴

Similarly, the *Commemorative Mass of the Archangel Raphael*, usually celebrated for travellers and pilgrims, was built around story of Tobias and Sarah.⁶⁵ Raphael is cited

⁶¹ Tobit 5-8 c.f. 8:7; II:151-3

⁶² II:203

⁶³ Ep. 1:11

⁶⁴ II:170-3

⁶⁵ II:222-4

as one of the seven holy angels who stand in the presence of the Lord sent to heal, and the Collect continues, saying:

O God who didst direct the blessed archangel to be a guide to thy servant Tobias hastening on his way, and didst give him as a guardian amidst all the changes and the chances of this mortal life; grant, we beseech thee, that we may be protected by the aid of the same angel, so that we may both avoid the dangers of this present life and may reach securely the joys of heaven.

Raphael's traditional ministry as the protector of travellers, and protector in both life and death is reaffirmed. The *Gradual* goes further, saying:

Alleluya. Angel of healing,
be with me perpetually,
as thou wast with Tobias,
so be with me on my way.

Alleluya. Send down to us from heaven the angel Raphael,
the giver of health, that he may heal all the sick,
and equally direct our actions.

Alleluya. The angel of the Lord descended from heaven,
and came and rolled back the stone from the door and sat upon
it.

Raphael is the giver of health and healing, who directs human action, and who, interestingly, is said to be the one who rolled the stone away from Christ's tomb. Following the *Offertory*, which calls him *Saint Raphael*, the *Secret* adds depth:

Send, O God, thine archangel Raphael, the worker of healing, to convey unto us health of soul and body; and may he pour upon us the gift of heavenly pity, and put away from us those things which are adverse.

Communion includes the ejaculatory prayer:

Let the shout of highest praise resound in the mouth of all, in praise of the blessed archangel Raphael, that he whose memory we keep on earth, may intercede for us before God in heaven. Alleluya.

The post-Communion prayer says:

Vouchsafe, O Lord God, to direct the archangel Raphael to our assistance; and may he whom we believe to be ever standing in the presence of thy majesty, assign our poor prayers to be blessed by thee.

This Mass conveys to the participants a comprehensive angelic ministry of guardianship, healing, guidance, protection, defeating demons, angelic mediation and the presentation of prayers to God, and the mediation of God's activity to men. It also confirms that Raphael was a part of the Cult of the Saints, and, as such, subject to veneration.

The *Mass of St Gabriel* (note *Saint Gabriel*, as opposed to the *Archangel Raphael*) develops his role in the visitation to Mary.⁶⁶ Of central importance is the *Gradual*:

Herald shining with exceeding splendour
jewel glistening with celestial ray,
be thou consolation to the desolate
and a firm protection to the tempted.

Thou Gabriel, *who burstest prisons*,
regard the poor among captives,
and bring them swiftly forth to life.

Alleluya. Through thee, O herald, a wonderful work is accomplished,
exceeding deep and notable;
through thee may that we ask become both possible and
attainable.

Highlighted here are a number of aspects not usually associated with Gabriel - being a consolation to the desolate and protecting the tempted, being the one who gets people out of prison, and being one who has a special interest in the captive poor. Gabriel is seen as an enabler who makes things both *possible* and *attainable*. The *Tract* then asks that Gabriel *shalt make us one with God*, and to intercede for *mercy* and *deliverance*, which implies a mediating and intercessory role, and the ability to

⁶⁶ II:224-6

deliver and save men from peril and danger. Developing this further, the Communion prayer says:

O Gabriel, comfort the mourners,
heal the sick, strengthen the weak,
make us ever gentle and humble,
and strong and established in the faith.

Again, this is a direct and personal ministry (*comforting mourners, healing and strengthening*) where Gabriel can move and motivate a man's soul, so he can *make us ever gentle and humble*, and that he can *establish* one in their faith. The service is concluded with a post-Communion prayer that says how Gabriel and all the heavenly powers intercede for men, and how the sacrament was taken *in veneration of them* and by which is *profitable to our salvation*. Again, the Mass is made effective by angels. What this Mass stresses is the ministry of revelation and illumination to men from God, that angels teach and guide. It is more than external protection and healing, as shown by Raphael's Mass, but an ability to work internally on a man's mind, body and soul.

The Proper of Saints takes these developments, and adds to them in numerous ways. In the *Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary* the Collect says:

O God, who was pleased that thy Word should take flesh in the womb of the blessed Virgin Mary, through the message of an angel.

This appears to be a reference similar to the tradition that says that Mary conceived *through* the angelic message, a literary picture shown in some Mediaeval poetry, which is also paralleled in the post-Communion prayer.⁶⁷

Arguably the most important angelic feast is *St. Michael the Archangel* on September 29th, and there is an enormous amount of growth in theology from the scholastic and Patristic base we have seen.⁶⁸ Firstly, the Collect says:

O God, who dost ordain the services of angels and men in a wonderful order; mercifully grant us that as thine angels always do you service in heaven, so our life may be defended by them on earth.

Here are the ideas of God conceiving angels and men as a single society, and that angels protect men here in earth. Following this is a *Sequence* that makes explicit the existence of the angelic hierarchies. Initially, the subject is Christ as King, and this is followed up by an exaltation of Michael *whose ministry gives lustre to the mighty universe*. The praise is directed to Christ, but hymns are in honour of Michael, who is shown to have true power across the whole of creation. It continues:

*Nine are the orders of the heavenly hosts, by thee created,
and these angel's forms you makest flames of fire at thy pleasure.
These are works of your primeval hand,
We latest in thine image fashioned.*

⁶⁷ II:288ff c.f. p.319 c.f. Gray pp.100-101

⁶⁸ II:516-9

Nine Orders are mentioned, as is the idea that angels were created in God's image before men were. The *Sequence* then describes the Orders:

Nine orders, each retaining its own office,
So teach divines, of heavenly hosts are reckoned -
The angel host, the angelic phalanx,
The principalities, the heavenly powers,
Might gracious mouthed, high names of dominion,
And thrones divine, and cherubim ethereal,
And seraphim with hair that glows as fire.

The two thing to note here are, first, the list omits Authorities, Rulers or Archangels, but the implication is clear. Second, the phrase *each retaining its own office* indicates that angels cannot and do not move between the hierarchies. It continues:

To you, Michael, first of heavenly princes,
And Gabriel, the Word's true messenger,
And Raphael, once on earth hired servant,
Bear us to those who rest in paradise.

Michael is now addressed directly. The three major angels are mentioned and given titles - Michael is the prince of heaven - as opposed to Christ the King, Gabriel's title is tied into the Annunciation, and Raphael's title is from the story in Tobit. They are invoked to *bear* souls into heaven.

All the commandments of the Father you fulfil,
Sent forth by Wisdom of the same,
And the coequal Spirit in one substance,
Which God you serve, ten thousand times ten thousand.
In twice ten thousand ministering courses
Your hundred thousand in the palace wait,
To which your king brought back a hundredth sheep,
Born of the Word; and a tenth piece of silver,
Over which, found, you do rejoice together,
You in heaven, we on earth below.

This is reaffirmation of a number of Biblical themes – angels serve the Triune God; their number is beyond measure, and they minister in both heaven and on earth. It also reiterates the theme of angels rejoicing over sinners coming to Christ, as well as the idea of men and angels joining together to praise, worship, and rejoice. Finally, are some Patristic echoes – the tradition of taking the parable of the 99 sheep as representing men as the missing piece of the heavenly society.⁶⁹

The final section of the *Sequence* talks of angels offering prayers to God, and mentions Michael warring gloriously, adding to the view that Michael was the warrior angel who defended Christians against the assaults of the devil. This *Sequence* is followed by the *Gospel* reading of Matthew 18:1-10, which alludes to Guardian Angels, and then an *Offertory* based on Revelation 8:3-4, which reaffirms that angels present

⁶⁹ See p.33 above

prayers to God. The presentation of prayers is again stressed in the *Secret* that follows, and also those prayers become more efficacious due to angelic intercession. Finally, the *Post Communion* prayer, again reiterates the intercession and *intervention* of Michael.

Less than a month later comes the *Feast of St. Michael in the Mountain Tomb* (Oct. 16th), ⁷⁰ which is in honour of either a 5th/6th century appearance of Michael at Monte Gargano, or an apparition in France which led to the Mont St. Michel tradition. Much of this service is the same as that on September 29th, however there some interesting differences, the main one being the use of a special form of the Kyrie Eleison, which indicates the Dionysian hierarchy:

O Christ, king enthroned on high, whom the nine fair ranks of angels praise incessantly, vouchsafe ever to have mercy on thy servants.

⁷⁰ II:536-7

(4) The Challenge to Mediaeval Angelology in the Initial Phases of the Reformation

Introduction.

As has been indicated, much of the popular understanding of angels in late Mediaeval England was built on the speculative end of Patristic thought. It is of no surprise then that when the Reformation began angelology was one of the areas that was singled out for severe criticism. While it is not the place of this thesis to examine the angelology of the continental reformers, their influence upon the English Reformation is undeniable, and so to understand the moves that began to happen under Henry VIII, one must look at what was happening in Europe – and this means that one must understand how Martin Luther regarded angels, and what of the mediaeval traditions he rejected. This will also highlight how Calvin later moved beyond Luther, and how Calvin's thinking superseded Luther's within the English Church – most clearly highlighted by the differences in the case of angelology between the 1549 and 1552 Prayer Books.

William Tyndale, as one of the very first English Reformers to write and expound his thought is also important to look at. He was essentially Lutheran in his outlook,⁷¹ but he also developed his own distinctive angles on subjects,⁷² and so it will be worth studying how, at the earliest stages of the Reformation, an Englishmen viewed Mediaeval angelology.

⁷¹ C.H. Williams *William Tyndale* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1969) p.85, 125

⁷² D. Daniell *William Tyndale* (London: Yale Uni. Press, 1994) pp.159-169

(A) Martin Luther's Approach to Angels.

It should be recognised that this is not an exhaustive exposition, but a statement based more on the attitude and methods that underpinned Luther's angelology as he decided what of the mediaeval traditions he would keep/reject/modify. It is of interest that Luther's disillusionment with the Church began with the reissue of an Indulgence similar to one issued by Clement VI in 1350, which promised that angels would remove souls from purgatory and ensure their safe journey to heaven.⁷³ Thus, Luther was bound to question how angels were viewed as he broke with Rome.

Luther rejected the Apocryphal books as authoritative, and finding some useful and others not,⁷⁴ his bluntest comments were reserved for those with the most angelology. Tobit, II Macabees, the additions to Daniel, and Esdras all gain short shrift.⁷⁵ Luther's attitude to Pseudo-Dionysius was much harsher, saying his ideas about the Celestial Hierarchy were *hallucinations*,⁷⁶ and *laughable*,⁷⁷ and his theology deserved to be *ridiculed*.⁷⁸ Even blunter is Luther's assertion that it is a *fanciful hodge-podge* that leads men away from Christ.⁷⁹ Regularly, he takes positions against both Dionysius and the scholastic tradition. For example, Luther says that God illuminates angels - they do not illuminate each other.⁸⁰ Also, while Dionysius said that the higher orders are not sent to earth, Luther notes that Scripture clearly says that *all* orders minister,

⁷³ Eds. J. Pelikan & H. Lehmann *Luther's Works* (Concordia/Fortress Press, 1958-1986), XXXVI: p.82, p.148

⁷⁴ Ed. B. Metzger *Oxford Annotated Apocrypha* (OUP, 1977) p. x

⁷⁵ Trans. & Ed. W. Hazlitt *The Table Talk of Martin Luther* (London: H.G. Bohn, 1857), XXIV

⁷⁶ *Luther* XX:26

⁷⁷ *Luther* XX:64

⁷⁸ *Luther* XIII:110-111

⁷⁹ *Luther* XXVI:109-110; LIV:112 c.f. *Table Talk* VII

⁸⁰ *Luther* XX:26

and he explains this by saying that all are sent, but the lower are sent visibly, and the higher invisibly, so they are never seen.⁸¹ (Implicitly, though, this means he accepted a hierarchical conception of angelic orders and organisation.) However, despite the criticisms of previous thinkers, angels are central to Luther's thought:

Let the beginning of all our affairs be prayer to God, and the next the thought of the care of angels.⁸²

Looking at the broad picture, God creates and controls everything *through* his angels, even the empires of the ungodly, and they intervene on God's behalf, even in political decision-making. The existence and ministry of angels is called an *ancient* and *heavenly* doctrine, known even by pagans, and is summed up with the phrase:

In this life, empires, states and households, and, in short, whatever this world has are all governed by the ministry of holy angels.⁸³

This does not mean that when something goes wrong, it implies fault in the angels – this is due to men's sin. Angels direct all human affairs,⁸⁴ but are ignorant of how God sustains and guides creation toward His ends.⁸⁵ Angels have a twofold ministry – one to minister to creation, and one to worship God.⁸⁶ For Luther, Guardian angels clearly exist,⁸⁷ and in the Church men live *with the guardian angels*, and there, men are

⁸¹ *Luther* XXIX:121

⁸² *Luther* IV:265

⁸³ *Luther* VI:89-93

⁸⁴ *Luther* III:62

⁸⁵ *Luther* XXXVII:208

⁸⁶ *Luther* VI:92 c.f. XXII:201

⁸⁷ *Luther* IV:265 c.f. IV:182/256

taught the godly life. In fact, where the church is, there is the ministry of angels.⁸⁸ They provide companionship, friendship and protection, are peaceable, merciful and kind, and they do this no matter how much men sin, and this is something men must imitate.⁸⁹ Angels protect houses, households and families,⁹⁰ and protect men from demons.⁹¹ As messengers, they guide men and inspire their thought *from without*, while God guides them *from within*, and they ceaselessly help men, helping, counselling and pleading, in order to advance them. Every man has a guardian angel, be they Christian or not, and the angel influences men through reasoning with the mind, not by supernatural altering of his thinking, as that is how God operates.⁹²

Nevertheless, criticisms of current practice is a regular theme. Luther rejects their place as mediators and intercessors in the Cult of Saints, saying that *there is not a single word of God's commanding us to call on either angels or saints, to intercede for us, and we have no examples in Scripture.*⁹³ From this, Luther, as a defence of the incarnation, says that angels cannot pay the ransom required to deal with sin,⁹⁴ and adds that they cannot sustain creation – this is done solely by God.⁹⁵ One does not become a Son of God through angels,⁹⁶ and salvation does not depend on them.⁹⁷

⁸⁸ *Luther* VIII:60, XXII:14, 20

⁸⁹ *Luther* IV:255 c.f. XXII:179

⁹⁰ *Luther* III:60

⁹¹ *Luther* XXII:208

⁹² *Luther* XX:170-172 c.f. 138

⁹³ *Luther* XXXV:198-9 c.f. *Table Talk* CLXXVIII

⁹⁴ *Luther* XXII:22

⁹⁵ *Luther* XXII:27

⁹⁶ *Luther* XXII:118

⁹⁷ *Luther* XXII:346

(B) William Tyndale's Attitude toward Angels.

At no stage does William Tyndale (c.1484-1536) expound his angelology, but he does mention them in the context of other subjects and the wider criticism of mediaeval Catholicism.

In *The Wicked Mammon*, Tyndale shows a close relationship between angels and men. Talking of the all sufficiency of Christ, he writes *whosoever doth the will of the Father shall be father, mother, sister and brother with the angels under Christ and that all theirs shall be all thine*, which sounds like a single society of angels and men.⁹⁸ Elsewhere, Tyndale reaffirms that angels are men's brethren; fellow servants of Christ, who defend men from demonic attack;⁹⁹ they guide men;¹⁰⁰ free men from prison;¹⁰¹ and ensure that men only die when God desires.¹⁰² Angels are called to serve men, and men must never be subject to them - only to Christ, since a man's faith is *lord over the angels ... and may be subject unto no creature*.¹⁰³ Similarly, in a rebuttal of Papal claims to be able to control and bind the angels, and remove souls from purgatory, Tyndale rejects it, saying Christ is the one with total control.¹⁰⁴

In his *Answer to Thomas More's Dialogue*, Tyndale says that angels cannot add to the already revealed Gospel, since *all the angels of heaven, if they were here, could*

⁹⁸ *Tyndale's Works* (Parker Society) I:110 – Full details in Bibliography.

⁹⁹ Tyndale II:169

¹⁰⁰ I:376

¹⁰¹ I:480

¹⁰² II:69

¹⁰³ III:117

¹⁰⁴ I:269 - 272

preach no more than is preached, of necessity to our souls. ¹⁰⁵ Angels cannot do miracles, ¹⁰⁶ and while they have an exalted position, as created beings they have no greater intrinsic honour than any other part of the created order. ¹⁰⁷

Going further, Tyndale criticises the Cult of Saints saying *angels are ministers sent of God to do service unto the elect*, and that if men *come in the right way, by the door of Christ's blood, and ask help, that he will send, if need be, an hundred legions of angels or saints.* ¹⁰⁸ It is not clear whether Tyndale believed in Guardian Angels, but this would suggest angelic ministry only for the saved. Tyndale also rejects the idea of specific saints or angels coming to do specific tasks, as a patron saint would, saying that God can respond to prayer how He wants, and is not bound by the limits of the Cultus.

Lastly, in an attack on the doctrine of Purgatory, Tyndale makes the point that when people die they go to heaven immediately, since in heaven men will be like the angels, and angels do not suffer purgatory, thus men do not either. ¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ III:27-8 c.f. II:116; III:170

¹⁰⁶ II:221

¹⁰⁷ III:59

¹⁰⁸ II:167

¹⁰⁹ III:181

(5) The Angelology of the Official Documents and Publications in the Reign of Henry VIII

Introduction.

From the early 1530s, Henry's flirtation with the Continental Reformers allowed Lutheran influence's to enter the English Church, and from a legislative point of view, the last 15 years of Henry's reign brought about a number of changes. The central documents were the *10 Articles and Injunctions* (1536), *The Institution of a Christian Man* (Bishop's Book) (1537), further *Injunctions* (1538), the *6 Articles* (1539), *Necessary Doctrine* (The King's Book) (1543), and, finally, the *Revision of the Litany* (1544). There were also a number of Primers published which reflected and nourished the faith of the average devout Catholic. The most important of these were *A Goodly Primer in English* by Thomas More (1535), *The Manual of Prayers* by John Hilsey (1539), and *The Primer set forth by the King's Majesty and His Clergy* (1545).

(A) Official Religious Legislation and Publications (1536 - 1545)

The 10 Articles and the Injunctions were the most *Protestant* moves of Henry's reign.¹¹⁰ Dealing with Cultus, while saints are explicitly mentioned, angels are implied; of the Ten Articles, Articles VII and VIII touch on our subject.¹¹¹ Article VII (*Of Honouring Saints*) states that saints are good examples of life, not channels of grace, so they can be looked to, but not invoked. Article VIII (*Of Praying To Saints*)

¹¹⁰ G.J. Cuming *A History of Anglican Liturgy* (London: MacMillan Press, 1982) p.33

¹¹¹ Ed. C.H. Williams *English Historical Documents (1485-1558): Vol V* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1967) pp.795-805

says that God alone gives grace, but saints intercede. They are not as powerful intercessors as Christ Himself, but they do intercede since:

... all Holy angels and saints pray in heaven for us and with us ... that we may have grace of Him and remission of our sins.

Angels truly pray for men, but it does not follow that men should ask them to do so.

From here, the article demands that one:

... must not think that any saint is more merciful, or will hear us sooner than Christ, or that any saint doth serve for one thing more than another, or is patron of the same.

In the Injunctions, the only thing to note is the tighter control on the Cult of the Saints.¹¹²

*The Bishop's Book*¹¹³ was never officially enforced, but it indicates how doctrine was developing during the late 1530's, and shows Lutheran influences.¹¹⁴ Its contents were simple; expositions of the Apostles' Creed, the Seven Sacraments, the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, the *Ave Maria*, and Articles on Justification, and Purgatory. The first allusion to angels comes with the Sixth Article of the Creed,¹¹⁵ which says Christ will have full dominion over *all the principates, potestates,*

¹¹² Williams pp.805 - 808

¹¹³ Ed. C. Lloyd *Formularies of Faith put forth by authority during the reign of Henry VIII* (Oxford University Press, 1856) pp.21-212

¹¹⁴ Cuming p.33

¹¹⁵ Lloyd p.44

powers, dominions. In the Seventh Article, on the Second Coming, we read that Christ will come with *all the orders of angels, waiting upon him as ministers*.¹¹⁶ According to the Dionysian scheme the higher Orders of angels do not interact with mankind, but their actions are mediated through to men via the lower orders. Here, *all orders* will come with Christ to gather the elect – a deviation from scholastic tradition, and closer to Luther.¹¹⁷ Finally, an appendix affirms that angels cannot match God's creative act,¹¹⁸ and that they have limited knowledge, with God keeping secrets from them.¹¹⁹ With the Seven Sacraments, in the section on Orders, John Chrysostom is quoted saying:

Neither angel nor archangel can of his own power give us any of these things which be given by God.¹²⁰

The Third Commandment, talking of the naming of churches, indicates that Michael was widely venerated, with churches, temples and altars dedicated to him - and restriction is placed on this.¹²¹ The *Ave Maria* talks of Gabriel as a *high angel* (but not archangel) and the magnitude of his role is stressed,¹²² and later, when talking of Elizabeth's proclamation (Lk. 1:41ff), the angel is said to have been sent and directed by the whole Trinity, which echoes Basil.¹²³

¹¹⁶ Ibid p.46

¹¹⁷ Sent. II:X:1-6; S.T. 1a: CXII:A 1-4

¹¹⁸ Ibid p.62

¹¹⁹ Ibid p.72

¹²⁰ Ibid p.106

¹²¹ Ibid p.141: See p.69 above.

¹²² Ibid p.205

¹²³ Ibid p.207; De. Sp. Sanct 16 & 20

The Royal Injunctions of 1538 too say nothing about angelology, but further restricts the Cultus.¹²⁴ Similarly, the Six Articles (1539) contain no angelology but continued to reform English Catholicism.¹²⁵ The King's Book (1543)¹²⁶ reflects Henry's break with Lutheranism, and his wish to maintain a Romeless Catholicism,¹²⁷ and is similar to the Bishop's Book, including a Declaration of Faith and doctrinal Articles. The expositions of the Apostle's Creed, the Seven Sacraments, the Third Commandment and *Ave Maria* are essentially identical to those in the Bishop's Book, except that the exposition of the Seventh Article of the Creed contains no mention of angelic orders.¹²⁸

Cranmer's Revision of the Litany (1544) drew on a number of sources, including Sarum and Luther's Litany,¹²⁹ and was heavily pruned, mainly of "minor" saints and feasts, but also of any reference to the angelic saints - Michael, Gabriel and Raphael. Despite this, the Litany contained the words:

All holy Angels and Archangels,
And all holy orders of blessed spirits, Pray for us.¹³⁰

Again, in the preface to the Litany itself, in an *Exhortation To Prayer*, Cranmer writes:

¹²⁴ Williams pp.811-814

¹²⁵ Ibid pp.814-817

¹²⁶ Source used:- Lloyd pp.213ff

¹²⁷ Cuming p.34

¹²⁸ Lloyd p.238

¹²⁹ J.E. Hunt *Cranmer's First Litany, 1544 and Merbeckes Book of Common Prayer noted 1550* (London, SPCK, 1939) c.f. Cuming pp.35-36

¹³⁰ Hunt p.89

(Let us pray that God will send) his holy angell
to be his succour, keeper, and defender
from all his adverseries and from all evyls. ¹³¹

This appears to be in line with a Lutheran understanding of angels, which implies, if not Guardian Angels (*succour, keeper and defender*), then a developed angelic ministry which protects, builds up, and guides men.

(B) Henrician Primers.

Primers were devotional books, not of a standard form, used by the laity. Most had a Kalendar, the Lord's Prayer, The Creed and the Ten Commandments, sometimes with expositions; some would have special prayers and graces, a confessional, and perhaps a few edifying treatises. ¹³² Most Henrician Primers were derived from Sarum, ¹³³ but as Lutheran influences crept in, a move away from the Sarum Rite began to occur. ¹³⁴ I will look first at Thomas More's Primer of 1535, published when Henry's political, and therefore theological, outlook changed. Next is Hilsey's Primer of 1539, published after the swings and roundabouts of the period 1536-39. Finally is Henry's own Primer of 1545, published when his situation had settled down and he had less need to bend to outside influences.

¹³¹ Ibid pp.35-36

¹³² C.C. Butterworth *The English Primers (1529-1545)* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1953) p.3

¹³³ Butterworth p.39; Ed. E. Burton *Three Primers of the reign of Henry VIII* (Oxford University Press, 1834) p. iii

¹³⁴ Cuming p.30

More's *Goodly Primer* is a full exposition of the Catholic Faith showing a number of parallels to the Bishop's Book of 1537, and an awareness of the need for reform.¹³⁵ It begins with an *Admonition to the Reader*, where he talks of why he included or excluded items. He mentions the Mass of the Five Wounds, used in the Sarum Rite, and his assault on the superstitious nature of the rite is comprehensive,¹³⁶ yet he doesn't attack Raphael's traditional position. The Kalender, includes the *Annunciation*, the *Appearance of St. Michael*, and *St. Michael's Feast*, but none of the fringe Sarum feasts. The exposition of the Creed talks of Christ judging the angels,¹³⁷ followed by the Annunciation which, interestingly, emphasises the Holy Spirit as the one who proclaimed the words, not Gabriel (Lk. 1:28) - in fact, Gabriel is not mentioned at all. Continuing, the Litany contains the words:

St. Michael, pray for us.

St. Gabriel, pray for us.

St. Raphael, pray for us.

All holy angels and archangels, pray ye for us.¹³⁸

The section on Christ's Passion shows how angels came to strengthen and comfort Christ and remind Him of the wonderful and marvellous nature of His passion, and how this would glorify the Father, and be preached throughout the whole world.¹³⁹ After the Passion comes *Instruction for Children*, in which children are exhorted to pray:

¹³⁵ Cuming p.31

¹³⁶ Burton pp.4-5: Sarum II:55-7: See p.82 above.

¹³⁷ Ibid p.42

¹³⁸ Ibid p.124

¹³⁹ Ibid p.173

Thy holy angel be with me, lest my deadly adversary have entrance into me.¹⁴⁰

The Manual of Prayers by John Hilsey (Bishop of Rochester) (1539) was an officially sanctioned Primer,¹⁴¹ and is essentially a selection in English from Sarum, with a more traditional form of the Litany.¹⁴² It begins with the Kalender, which neglects the *Appearance of Michael*, while keeping the other angelic feasts in More's Primer. Part I contains Lessons and Creeds. Part II is on Prayer, and besides the *Ave Maria* (no angels mentioned), the main point to note is the prayer at bedtime, which follows More's children's prayer saying:

Thy holy angels be with me, lest my deadly adversary have entrance into me.¹⁴³

The plural *angels* being a noticeable difference from More's prayer, and perhaps a move away from the idea of individual Guardian Angels. The Litany, unlike More's, contains the phrase *All orders of holy spirits, pray for us.*,¹⁴⁴ and the Dirge uses the parable of Lazarus the Beggar,¹⁴⁵ describing angels assisting the soul at death, adding a lesson talking of angels witnessing the burying of the dead and giving thanks to

¹⁴⁰ Ibid p.215

¹⁴¹ Ibid p.305

¹⁴² Cuming p.32

¹⁴³ Burton p.331

¹⁴⁴ Ibid p.381

¹⁴⁵ Ibid p.414

God.¹⁴⁶ The Dirge finishes with a prayer for the Clergy, asking God to bless them with *light in the fellowship of thy blessed angels.*¹⁴⁷

The King's Primer (1545), issued by Henry to re-assert a more traditional Catholicism, was essentially designed to ensure uniformity rather than reform.¹⁴⁸ Its contents are traditional, and it uses Cranmer's new Litany of 1544.¹⁴⁹ The section on Prayers includes the Angelic Salutation, but no bedtime prayer referring to angels,¹⁵⁰ but asks for protection straight from God. Yet in the morning prayer, one reads:

Against the going of young Tobit into a strange country, (you) didst provide thy holy angel and messenger to be his guide.

This is a clear reference to the guidance, and the protection of angels during the day. Again, for this protection one intercedes to God alone.¹⁵¹ *The Prayer of any Captive*, based on Psalm 142, teaches that angels intercede to God on the captive's behalf for God to be with them and give them freedom.¹⁵² Finally, the Litany deviates from, and edits, the ones seen before saying:

All holy angels and archangels, and all holy orders of blessed spirits, pray for us.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁶ Ibid p.415

¹⁴⁷ Ibid p.421

¹⁴⁸ Ibid p.457

¹⁴⁹ Cuming p.38

¹⁵⁰ Burton p.459 c.f. p.464, 476

¹⁵¹ Ibid p.495-500

¹⁵² Ibid p.505

¹⁵³ Ibid p.481

The Henrician sources show that while there was a continuation of mediaeval ideas, angelology was being shaped by some Lutheran thinking, in that the subordination of angelic ministry to Man's direct relationship with God is stressed in conjunction with a restriction of the Cultus. This reformation of angelology would continue further under Edward VI.

Chapter 4

The Foundations of Anglican Angelology (1547-1590)

Introduction.

Before starting this section, a reason for its structure needs to be stated. From the start of Edward VI's reign until the Armada was defeated in 1588, the Church of England (and England in general) was in what may be called self-defence mode. It was a period of self-definition against Rome by attacking the wider picture, and angelology was, at best, a minor issue when seen in the grand scheme of things. This attitude to angelology is reflected in the both officially published religious literature, and the works of individual divines. In fact, there were no formal expositions of angelology until the mid 1590s when Richard Hooker and William Perkins, independently of each other, placed short sections on angelology in their systematic works. Until then angelology, as with much of the theology, was imported from the Continent. As Luther's influence decreased, others gained prominence, including Zwingli, Bucer, Oecampadius, Calvin, but later on Bullinger who became so influential that in 1586 the reading of his works was enjoined upon the clergy.¹ This, as we will see, was an important move.

¹ Bullinger (Parker Society) Vol. I: p. viii (For full details, see bibliography); S. Neill *Anglicanism* (London: Penguin Books, 1958) pp.127-8

From the 1540's English Protestantism shifted from its original Lutheran inspiration, and Reformed Continental thought became the strongest influence.² However, these other influences were usually differed little from Calvinism in the final analysis,³ and this is also true of angelology. Stephen Neill wrote that:

By the end of Henry's reign, Calvin was already the theological guide of many English churchmen.⁴

While this may be overstating the case, Calvin does provide a typical exposition of Reformed Continental doctrine of the time, especially in terms of his angelology. Stephen Noll says:

John Calvin offers the most accessible and representative treatment of the Reformed doctrine of angels in his *Institutes*.⁵

Therefore I will use Calvin as representative of the Continental Reformed thought that influenced England from 1540s onward (an influence that became more explicit throughout the century). (However, as I will later note, Bullinger, Zwingli's successor, was the exception to the approach typified by Calvin.)

This meant that by the 1590s, when Hooker and Perkins did their work, the religious and theological culture required one to either followed a broadly continental

² Nichols *The Panther & The Hind* (T&T Clark, Edinburgh, 1993) pp.30-1

³ A. G. Dickens *The English Reformation* (Fontana/Collins, 1973) p.400

⁴ S. Neill *Anglicanism* (London: Pelican Book, 1958) p.62

Reformed line, or start from scratch and work out a position for oneself distinctive from both Calvinism and Rome.

While there were no extended expositions in this period, what discussions there were laid the foundation for Hooker and Perkins, and in such a way that the two distinct approaches shown by them can be discerned as developing during this period.

For these reasons, I shall structure this chapter as follows.

1. A summary of the position in 1547.
2. An overview of both Calvin's angelology, and Calvinism's influence on the English Church.
3. A survey of official documents from 1547-1555.
4. A survey of the angelology of the Edwardian reformers.
5. A survey of official documents from 1559 to 1590
6. Angels in the thought of Anglican Divines 1559-1590
 - (a) The angelology of Bullinger.
 - (b) The angelology of the Elizabethan Apologists.

⁵ S.F. Noll *Thinking About Angels: An essay in:* Ed. A.N.S. Lane *The Unseen World* (Paternoster Press, 1996) p. 9

(1) English Angelology in 1547: A summary.

By the time of Henry's death in 1547, he had moved to a position where, even if he did not accept Protestantism, he understood the need for reform. At this stage, the use of Apocrypha was taken for granted, as was an essentially mediaeval approach to reading Scripture, and while Henry restricted the Cult of Saints, it was not suppressed, merely purged of excesses. However, one must note that there was no officially expressed angelology. It is true that Sarum contained much, but when it came to authorised Primers, perhaps due to pressure from the Reformers, they were more than cautious.

In popular traditions the Patristic influence was strong with angels comforting and guiding the soul in death, the analogy of the 99 sheep, the ignorance of Christ's mission and bloodstained clothing, and the intermediary role of angels. Guardian Angels were said to exist, and their role was developed and personalised. They taught, illuminated, mediated, converted sinners, protected men, cleansed them from sin, and changed people's hearts and minds from evil toward God. Pseudo Dionysius's teachings are apparent, but not always expounded nor defined.

Sarum had a rich angelology, and throughout the liturgical Kalender angels were a recurring feature. The readings used the Old and New Testaments alongside the Apocrypha, and those chosen were often those where angelic ministry is plainest, and a whole raft of prayers, collects, sequences, graduals and secrets reinforced the picture. The efficacy of angelic intercession, invocation and mediation is clear, and people were encouraged to pray to angels and their Guardian Angel for support and

divine intervention. The presentation of the Dionysian hierarchy was usual, even if a detailed explanation was not, and traditions around Michael, Gabriel and Raphael were extensive. Michael was a saint, the prince of heaven, protector of souls in death, and the slayer of Satan, whose influence throughout creation is second only to the Triune God Himself. Gabriel, also a saint, and now an archangel, was the helper of those in prison, and a healer and strengthener of the weak in faith and spirit. Raphael, again, a saint, was especially seen as the healer, had a rôle in marriage, Guardian Angel for pilgrims, and one who bound demons and protected men from demonic attack.

Popular beliefs added minor traditions to this broad outline, such as literal conception through Gabriel's message, or Mary's exalted position being regularly bolstered by stories of angelic visits, visions and affirmations. Also, children having special protection from angels was a recurring idea.

However, when Henry died, exiles who had been living in Europe and imbibing Continental Reformed strains of thought, came back looking for England to have a reformation of the kind seen in places like Geneva, Zurich and Strasbourg.⁶

⁶ W.P. Haugaard *Elizabeth and the English Reformation* (CUP, 1968) p.26

(2:a) The Biblicism Behind The Angelology of John Calvin : (Institutes I:XIV:3-12)

Calvin's approach to angelology, while exhibiting a profound rejection of mediaeval Catholic ideas, also differed radically from Lutheranism. He refused to go beyond the explicitly Scriptural,⁷ and was generally reluctant to find anything positive in the subject at all. He never denied that angelic ministry existed, but he restricted both its range and the study of it. Schriener notes that:

Calvin, himself was, in many ways reserved and uneasy about angelic beings and tried to limit their adoration and their role in the church.⁸

His approach is also, not surprisingly, reminiscent of Augustine, and it is also worth noting here his use of the Fathers. Whereas, in his *Institutes*, Calvin cites Augustine frequently and authoritatively, of the great Patristic angelologists, Basil has just two citations, Gregory Nazianzus two, Origen one, and Gregory of Nyssa none.⁹ His section on angelology uses no Patristic references.

The introduction to the section on angels is notable for highlighting Calvin's approach.¹⁰ Angels are part of God's Creation, but he makes clear that Scripture says nothing of their creation, and this implicitly lays the ground rule that anything not in Scripture will not be examined. However, Calvin wants to move further than this, since only that which is *distinct and explicit* in Scripture will be examined. Thus, as

⁷ S. Schriener *The Theatre of His Glory* (Labyrinth Press, 1991) p.39 c.f. p.52

⁸ Schriener p.49

⁹ Trans. H. Beveridge *John Calvin's Institutes* (Wm. B. Eerdmanns Pub. Co, 1994) p. xxi-xxiv

¹⁰ *Institutes* I:XIV:3

soon as any effort, speculation or thinking around the subject is required, he will not do it. Christians must take seriously angels' reality, since they are a *noble and illustrious* part of creation, but while Luther said *Let the beginning of all our affairs be prayer to God, and the next the thought of the care of angels*,¹¹ Calvin places their importance in the *refutation of numerous errors*, and the elimination of superstition - i.e. only when angelology can be used to defend the true faith has it any value. Again, any idea that an understanding of angels could be useful in daily Christian life is absent, as it is only the generalised role of angels in God's wider providence that gains any credence. Calvin then lists some of the errors one can fall into when looking at angels, and from here he ends the introduction with the warning that angelology is often dangerous, potentially misleading, and that it is *our (Christian) duty to remain in willing ignorance* of it.

After this cautious start, Calvin continues on a negative trajectory. After saying that *angels are ministers to execute the commands of God*, he attacks mediaeval angelology in a three-fold form. Firstly, Peter Lombard is criticised for speculating about the angelic creation, for the reason that Moses had said that the heavens were *created perfectly*, and that should be *enough for us*. At this point, Calvin feels driven to describe how one should read Scripture in order to gain a true understanding of angels, and to this end, cites two methods for properly reading scripture. The first is that *in obscure matters (we) must not speak or think, or even long to know more than the Word of God has given*. Second, is that one must direct one's mind to those things that are *edifying* and to *not indulge in curiosity, or studying things that are of no use*. Effectively, Calvin has done two things here. First, he wards the

¹¹ Luther's Works IV:265

reader off investigation and speculation, saying that one must not want to go beyond the plain meaning of Scripture. Second, he effectively asserts that angelology is not only not an edifying branch of theology, but it is fundamentally of no use – and this shapes his whole approach from now onward. Angelology is a superfluous area of theology, therefore anyone who studies it is wasting their time on that which is useless. From here he returns to his criticism of speculation and the *babblings of idle men, concerning the nature, ranks and numbers of angels*, and naturally from here makes short shrift of Pseudo-Dionysius.¹²

When Calvin finally starts his positive description, its brevity is interesting.¹³ Angels are celestial spirits, whom God uses to fulfil His will - to be messengers who manifest themselves to men. Calvin identifies a number of names for them from Scripture - Hosts, Principalities, Powers and Dominions, Virtues and Thrones – but is reluctant to draw much meaning from their names. Calvin then asserts that Scripture's main concern is to teach and build up men in their faith, and as such angels are *ministers and dispensers of the divine bounty toward us*. They watch for men's safety, defend men, guide them, and *take heed that no evil befall us*.¹⁴ From here Calvin deals with the issue of Guardian Angels, and even though he acknowledges the great Christian and Jewish traditions to this effect, he will say nothing. The angels of the Persians and Greeks in Daniel may teach angels ruling over provinces, and Matthew 18:10 might indicate Guardian Angels for individuals, as could other verses, but nothing is certain. Ultimately, Calvin says it is not worth worrying about, since

¹² Institutes I:XIV:4

¹³ I:XIV:5

¹⁴ I:XIV:6

nothing can be gained from it, and it is wrong to assume that the only care God provides is the ministry of angels - they are only part of God's wider providence.¹⁵

Returning again to criticism of speculation, Scripture does indicate different names and roles given to angels, but these were only given due to human weakness, as were bodily descriptions of angels. Therefore to build a detailed hierarchical system, or study the angelic nature, is beyond the evidence and *presumptuous*, and implicitly succumbing to human weakness.¹⁶ Calvin then seems to realise that his approach could be seen as undermining Scripture, by not asserting angelic existence and mission enough, and so in an attempt to not be seen as trivialising, denying, or ignoring angels, Calvin reaffirms their necessity (within the context of God's wider providence) – but their ministry is only for the elect.¹⁷ He rejects the Saducees, who said that angels were simply movements within the hearts of men, saying they are true beings with an essence or nature. Scripture testifies to this, and to deny this is a Satanic deception.

This point guides the next section, the start of the attack on superstition, and again, Calvin's method is clear. He starts the whole argument by saying that man is prone to superstition, thus, again, undermining the confidence of the reader to properly study the subject. He continues in a similar vein to Luther by saying that by believing in the hierarchies and ministries of angels, man's weakness is fuelled to a point where Christ is obscured.¹⁸ Angels are great beings, but God is all-sufficient, and He does not need angels for Him to act. True, God sometimes uses angels, but not always and not

¹⁵ I:XIV:7

¹⁶ I:XIV:8

¹⁷ I:XIV:9

¹⁸ See p.93 above.

necessarily. God has promised to care for men, and in order to comfort men's weakness, God reveals there are angels who will also help in times of trouble. Implicitly, Calvin again makes angels superfluous to God, and parallels an interest in angelic ministry with human weakness, and suggests that God only revealed that angels exist because men are weak.¹⁹ He finishes his exposition with a criticism of the Platonic philosophy which underpinned Dionysius and those who followed his scheme.²⁰

Calvin seems to want to do two things. First, to affirm that angels exist, as Scripture attests, but only in the context of God's wider providence, and he avoids talk of specific ministries toward individuals. Second, he wants to ensure that angels are studied as little as is possible. Angels are superfluous in his Christocentric theology. Luther's positive practicality has gone, and Calvin's method is to highlight Scriptural issues, and then pronounce the majority of them irrelevant or dangerous. Schriener sums it up well:

The limitation of angels (in Calvin's theology) was due to two factors. First, Calvin was attempting to abolish all idolatrous worship (and) the cult of angels. ... But Calvin's restriction of the power and authority of the angels is also indicative of his doctrine of providence as a whole, which never allowed real independence to secondary means.²¹

¹⁹ I:XIV:11

²⁰ I:XIV:12

²¹ Schriener pp.52-3

These two attitudes, along with his strong Biblicism, would shape much thought in the next 100 years, as well as much revolt against it, as we shall see.

(2:b) English Calvinism (1547-1662)
The Development And Influence Of Calvinism From 1547 To 1662,
And The Impact Of This Development On Angelology In The
Church Of England.

From this background, one can identify what may be seen as the defining points of a classically Continental Reformed and Calvinist approach to angelology. They are:

(a) A Biblicism based on *Sola Scriptura* that is reluctant to move beyond the plain meaning of a text, and thus a reluctance to speculate or think around Biblical texts.

(b) A reluctance to engage in the Patristic heritage and wider Church traditions regarding angelology, such as Mediaeval Scholastic angelology, and the wider Roman Catholic theological heritage in general.

(c) A rejection, specifically, of the role of angels in the Mediaeval Cultus, and of the role of angels in Christian life and spirituality in general. This was linked also to a reluctance generally to promote the idea of angels as a secondary means used by God – especially when it could be linked to the Catholic theology that underpinned the idea of receiving grace ex-opere operato.

(d) A very strong subordination and minimisation of angelic ministry compared to Man's direct relationship with God, where Christ was *the* source of all grace.

(e) A reluctance to see angels as necessary or important in theology, and an attitude that saw that angelology, as a subject, was at best useless, and at worst harmful to those who studied it.

While this may be seen as the defining methodology that shaped Calvinist angelology, what we see in this period reflects what many scholars have debated in recent years, that Calvinism, as a belief system was a many faceted and slowly developing creature from the mid 16th century onward. White writes that:

There was a rich complexity to Calvinism. ... (Calvinism was) a living organism capable, within recognised continuities, of development and changes of emphasis.²²

Even clearer is Holmes who sees that Calvinism was *a broad umbrella under which a range of opinions sat*, and that there was *no unanimity, but instead a plethora of minor difference and developments* that led to a *family of approaches*.²³

Many scholars see the English Church in this period as broadly Augustinian with additional Continental influences, and while Calvin was clearly strongly influenced by Augustine, the two thinkers were not identical in their theology. Certainly if one takes beliefs regarding the church and predestination as the measuring stick, it appears that the Church of England was essentially Augustinian – and many claimed

²² P. White *Predestination, Policy and Polemic* (CUP, 1992) p. xii

²³ S. R. Holmes *Listening To The Past* (Paternoster, 2002) pp. 69, 84

themselves to be as well.²⁴ However, in terms of angelology, as we shall see, what is clear from this study, is that the 16th century English Divines were definitely more than just Augustinian in their angelology. Clearly they retained Augustine's caution and unwillingness to dogmatise speculation, however the majority went beyond into an approach that shows strongly a Calvinist style approach – one of a reluctance to engage in the subject at all.

As we shall also see as this thesis progresses into the 17th century, the Calvinists (and those generally influenced by his thought and the theology of his successors) that will be discussed reflect the broad nature of Calvinism in this period, and shows that all did not adhere to all the above points and principles strictly. For example, we will see that William Perkins (c. 1595) gives a classic exposition about angels based on the above principles, leading to a minimalist angelology, and this was mirrored by James Ussher throughout his long career in a lack of interest in the subject despite being well equipped theologically to do so. However, Richard Sibbes, a model Calvinist in all other respects, did not stick closely to the principles above, and looked to find a positive place for angels in both theology and spirituality – even though, arguably, he struggled to truly do so, since other aspects of his Calvinism seemingly restricted his methodology and approach and made it difficult to follow through fully. Finally, Joseph Hall in his exposition on angels seems willing to compromise, to varying degrees, on all these areas except an acceptance of the mediating role of angels as exemplified by the Cultus.

²⁴ e.g. White pp. 54, 64, 154

All this will become clear as the thesis progresses, and therefore, it must be kept in mind as the thesis develops, Calvinism is not necessarily a fixed term when discussing angelology, and it needs to be recognised that while people may have held Calvinist beliefs in some areas, when it came angelology there was less conformity of approach and attitude as there may have been in other areas.

(3) Angelology in Legal and Religious Documents from 1547-1553.

In terms of official literature, the flow of the religious thought under Edward was that in 1547 the 1538 Injunctions were reissued followed by a new Book of Homilies. The First Prayer Book arrived in 1549, followed by the Second Prayer Book and the 42 Articles in 1552. Finally, in 1553, a Primer and a Catechism for School Teachers were issued.

(A) The Book of Homilies (1547)

The Book of Homilies appeared in two stages, the first in 1547, and the second under Elizabeth I in 1562. In the first group of Homilies, a couple of interesting angelic references appear. The first, in *Exhortation against the Fear of Death*, the parable of Poor Lazarus was used, who *by the ministry of angels sent him unto Abraham's bosom, a place of rest, joy and heavenly consolation.*²⁵ Similarly, later in the same sermon series we hear that Christians will be protected from demonic assaults

²⁵ *Sermons or Homilies Appointed to be read in Churches* (London: Prayer Book and Homily Society, 1833) pp.64-5

and will get to live in peace in the fellowship of innumerable angels.²⁶ It seemed important to the writers of the Homilies that people knew angels were not only active in life, but would remain active in death, and would be the society with whom they will be in heaven. Clearly, Christ is the main source of comfort and protection, but the Calvinist influence had not yet reached England enough to diminish the picture. Finally, in *An Exhortation to Good Order, and Obedience to Rulers and Magistrates*, we read God has appointed all things in heaven in *distinct, several orders and states of archangels and angels*, and on earth, *in a most excellent and perfect order*.²⁷ This is interesting because from this basis angels are used as a model of obedience for people on earth, suggesting, in similar terms to Luther (and Pseudo-Dionysius), that an obedient hierarchy in heaven was the model to be reflected here on earth – an idea that would recur and be developed over the next 100 years.²⁸

(B) The 1549 and 1552 Prayer Books.

The Homilies were followed by the Prayer Books, which though written by Cranmer,²⁹ were approved by a committee.³⁰ While Brightman's study of the Books details many sources,³¹ it is clear that Cranmer was also an innovator himself,³² and the 1549 Book, while showing some Lutheran and continental influences, was unique.³³ The 1549 Book was criticised by the English bishops, and influential

²⁶ *Sermons or Homilies* p.70

²⁷ *Sermons or Homilies* p.72

²⁸ S.T. 1a: CVIII:5-8; Luther Works XXIX:121

²⁹ *Sermons or Homilies* p.46

³⁰ G.J. Cuming *A History of Anglican Liturgy* (London: MacMillan Press, 1982) pp.45-6

³¹ F.E. Brightman *The English Rite (Vols I & II)* (London: Rivington, 1921)

³² P. Newman-Brooks *Cranmer in Context* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 1989) pp.52-4

³³ Cuming p.51

Europeans based in England,³⁴ which drove a more Continental Reformed settlement in the 1552 Book.³⁵

A quick look at Cranmer's method would be valuable here, for while he was one of the greatest liturgists, and even though he had a good knowledge of the Fathers, for Cranmer, everything was second to, and subordinate to, Scripture.³⁶ He held to all the central dogmas of the reformers, especially the concept of a non-mediated faith,³⁷ and had a good understanding of the Continental Reformers, and was influenced by them. However, his work in the Prayer Books remained quintessentially English and different from those in Europe.³⁸ His method was one of using Scripture to reform abuse in line with his Reformed beliefs and his unique grasp of the doctrine and practice of the Fathers, as opposed to aiming to having a continental reformation in England – there was no change for the sake of change.³⁹ However, the increasing influence of Continental Reformed thought can be detected in the angelology of the two books, as Cranmer moved in a more Reformed direction.⁴⁰

Compared with Sarum, the two Prayers Books are short and compact.⁴¹ Cranmer wanted to weed and simplify the service in order to ensure national uniformity, and maintain the support of the majority.⁴² Around angelology Cranmer's editing was particularly brutal. Graduals, Sequences, Offertories, Tracts and Secrets, and various

³⁴ Harrison & Sansom *Worship in the Church of England* (London: SPCK, 1982) p.43; C. Haigh *The English Reformation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994) pp.173ff

³⁵ Dickens pp.318ff / Cuming pp.70-75 / Harrison & Sansom p.45 / Haigh p.168

³⁶ Newman-Brooks p. viii, 3

³⁷ Harrison & Sansom p.43

³⁸ Harrison & Sansom p.40; D. MacCulloch *The Later Reformation In England (1547-1603)* (London: MacMillan, 1990) p.16

³⁹ Harrison & Sansom p.48, 62

⁴⁰ Harrison & Sansom pp.47-8 ; MacCulloch p.13

⁴¹ Harrison & Sansom p.42, 48

masses and feasts, all fruitful areas of angelology in the Sarum Rite, simply disappear. But his editing was also very subtle, as will become clear when I look at some of the innovations compared with Sarum.

In the Kalender the only feasts which remained of Sarum were those of the New Testament saints, ⁴³ plus, strangely, that of St. Michael and All Angels. All other Sarum festivals are lost, or absorbed into others.

The Te Deum in both Books says:

We praise thee, O God, we (ac) knowlage thee to be the Lorde.

All the earth doeth worshippe thee, the father everlasting.

To thee all Angels crye aloude to the heavens and all the powers therein.

To thee Cherubin, and Seraphin continually doe crye. ⁴⁴

This is a simple and scriptural picture, and one that makes no link between angels and men. Similarly, the *Benedicte*, in both, exhorts angels to worship God, but they use slightly different versions due to improved translations into English. ⁴⁵

The Litany is the first place where the angelology of the two Books differs. The 1549 Book, following Cranmer's editing of Sarum in the 1544 Litany, says:

All holy angels and archangels

⁴² c.f. *Of Ceremonies*

⁴³ Harrison & Sansom p.57

⁴⁴ Brightman pp.136/7

⁴⁵ Brightman pp.138/9

and all the holy orders of blessed spirits, pray for us.⁴⁶

In the 1552 Book, this, and the following exhortations to *All Holy Patriarchs and Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, Confessors and Virgins* are omitted. This indicates that while Cranmer in 1549 still recognised that Biblically angels prayed for men, even if men did not ask for that, by 1552 Calvinist style influences had minimised the intercessory role of angels to a point where he could remove this from the Litany.

In the various readings throughout the year angels appear, and the main point to note is their lack of focus on ministry for individual Christians. The first is at Christmas, where the 1549 Book, following Sarum, has the reading in Luke 2 about the angels appearing to the shepherds - the 1552 omits this reading.⁴⁷ Both books, however, after the Collect, have a reading of Hebrews 1:1-12, which talks of Christ being superior to the angels and equal to God. Interestingly, the reading ends at verse 12, leaving out verse 14, which both avoids citing angelic ministry to men, and which also places the focus on Christ as exalted above angels.⁴⁸ On *Innocents Day*, both Books use Matthew 2:1-18, which tells of the angels warning Joseph about Herod's coming attack,⁴⁹ and on the Sunday after Christmas, both Books recount how an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph.⁵⁰ Unlike Christmas, both Books, at Epiphany, contain the reading about the angel appearing to the shepherds,⁵¹ and on the First Sunday in Lent, Christ's temptation is the reading (Matt. 4), where angels are said to

⁴⁶ Brightman pp.174/5

⁴⁷ Brightman pp.218-221

⁴⁸ Brightman pp.220-223

⁴⁹ Brightman pp.236/7 c.f. Mt:2:19f

⁵⁰ Brightman pp.240-243

⁵¹ Brightman pp.246/7 c.f. Lk. 2:38ff

both protect Christ, and to have come and ministered to Him as well.⁵² The reading on the Sunday before Easter is Matthew 26-27, where Christ said he had twelve legions of angels at his command to save him, which makes the point that angels are subordinate to Christ, and serve Him.⁵³ On the Monday before Easter, Isaiah 63 talks of how the angel of the Lord protected and saved those in distress,⁵⁴ and this neatly fits in with the reading on Wednesday, where Luke 22 describes how angels came to minister to Christ whilst he prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane.⁵⁵ However, both Books, on Easter Day itself, make no mention of the angels at the tomb, a feature of Sarum,⁵⁶ using John 20:1-10, which stops short of mentioning the angels, and Mark 16 which calls the figure at the tomb simply a young man. However, on the Monday Luke 24, the Emmaus Road, is used which mentions that the women had seen visions of angels.⁵⁷ Perhaps the issue here was the tradition of angels sending the women out to tell others of the resurrection. Reformers would not have felt comfortable with citing angels as a driving force behind the spreading of the good news of the resurrection, but Mark 16 does not have the angelic commission, and Luke 24 simply says there was a vision announcing the resurrection, with no mention of a commission. Trinity Sunday's reading for both Books is Revelation 4, which talks of the Living Creatures, who are generally regarded to be angels worshipping God,⁵⁸ and the second Sunday after Trinity is the parable of Lazarus who was taken to Abraham's bosom by the angels (Lk. 16).⁵⁹

⁵² Brightman pp.296/7

⁵³ Brightman pp.322/3

⁵⁴ Brightman pp.332/3

⁵⁵ Brightman pp.356/7

⁵⁶ Sarum I:292, 300, 316 c.f. Young *Drama of the Mediaeval Church* I:533

⁵⁷ Brightman p.406/7

⁵⁸ Brightman p.456-459

The Annunciation in both Books begins with a Collect, that clearly deviates from Sarum Rite, which said:

O God, who was pleased that thy Word should take flesh in the womb of the blessed Virgin Mary, through the message of an angel.⁶⁰

However, the Prayer Books say:

We have known Christ thy Son's Incarnation, by the message of the angel.

Sarum talks of how the *Word became flesh through the message*. Here though, *by the message* Christ becomes *known*. This is a clear rejection of the mediaeval tradition surrounding Gabriel and the Incarnation, and a refocusing on God as the active agent in the Incarnation, and the angel just as one who announces the event.⁶¹

The festival of St. Peter arguably has the Feast of St. Peter's Chains in the background, and while the 1552 service is shorter (missing out the opening prayer based on Psalm 119), both still use the same reading (Acts 12) where an angel freed Peter from jail. Interestingly, the reading only goes to verse 11, subtly omitting verse 15 where the praying disciples indicate that Peter had his own Guardian Angel.⁶²

⁵⁹ Brightman p.464/5

⁶⁰ Sarum II:319

⁶¹ Brightman pp.574/5 c.f. Gray pp.100-101

⁶² Brightman pp.598

When coming to the feast of St. Michael and All Angels, ⁶³ Cranmer's pruning is clear, as is his method. For Cranmer, Scripture is primary, and this leads to three consequences. First, the Apocrypha is sidelined; second, no tradition is accepted that is not verifiable by Scripture; and third, nothing not explicitly sanctioned in Scripture is used. As previously mentioned, it is noticeable that Michael is the only non-New Testament saint to have a festival – and the fact that he is still cited as a saint is strange. A reason for this could be that Cranmer did not follow a Continental Reformed attitude in seeing that angels, in themselves, were an inherent threat to true religion and piety, but merely needed to be set in a proper context – a more Lutheran attitude and approach – and so it also seems to be a pro-active attempt to redress the imbalance left by mediaeval angelology but without succumbing to a Calvinist style approach.

The first thing to note is that it is now *St. Michael and all Angels*, the individual feasts of Gabriel and Raphael being removed from the liturgical Kalender, to make one compound service from the three - to return Gabriel to a more restrained and Biblical position, and to remove Raphael completely. The colourful Sequences, Prayers and Graduals are removed, taking some notable teachings with them. Obviously, any reference to Dionysian hierarchies has gone, as have Guardian Angels and also any indication of their place in the Cultus. More subtly, there is no reference to the joint human and angelic society, hinted at by Hebrews 12:22. Also, Gabriel is ignored, and all the angelic roles given to him are removed. For example, Sarum highlights that Gabriel comforts, heals and strengthens, and that he is an archangel, and while these are all angelic roles, since nowhere are they in Scripture explicitly given to Gabriel,

⁶³ Brightman p620ff

they are omitted. Only Michael is mentioned by name, and being the only archangel named in Scripture, this is understandable. What remains of the service is short, simple and to the point.

The 1549 service begins by changing the Psalm used in Continental Catholic services (Psalm 103, with v. 20 stating the power and might of the angels), to Psalm 113, which, while talking of God's goodness and providence, makes no mention of angels. This is an interesting opening to a service which had previously exalted Michael as the one who gives *mighty lustre to the universe*, making the point that God works providence, not angels.⁶⁴ This Psalm was removed and not replaced in 1552.

The Collect of both services is restrained:

Everlasting God, which has ordained and constituted
the services of all Angels and men in a wonderful order:
mercifully grant that they which always do thee service in heaven,
may by their appointment succour and defend us in earth:
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

A number of things are worth noting here. There is no mention of special angelic ministries, the Dionysian hierarchy, or the intercessory role. *Succour and defend* limits angels to helping men in times of difficulty alone, and even then it is clear that this by God's *appointment* – any idea of autonomy is absent. *Wonderful Order* is vague, probably just meaning that God has ordered creation with angels and men

⁶⁴ c.f. Sarum II:517

within a general order and scheme of things. This Collect is followed by the reading Revelation 12, which talks of Michael fighting and defeating the devil, and then Matthew 18, which says children have angels in heaven.

And there the service ends. The difference would have been clear to those participating. For those brought up with the Sarum Rite, little could be found in the service to support the mediaeval ideas. Within a generation, those with no knowledge of the Catholic tradition would have gained little that may have led to any developed idea of angelic ministry. It is almost as if Michael's role (and angelic roles in general) was such an issue that there was a need to address it with a service as reserved and stripped as possible to put angels back in a place that English Reformers felt was Biblical, and that they were comfortable with.

The service for SS Simon and Jude has another subtle piece of editing where the first eight verses of Jude are read, stopping short of the reference to Michael fighting over Moses' body in verse 9 – perhaps in order to remove Scriptural allusions to traditions of Michael helping souls in death. What remains is the dual affirmation of the angelic fall where they *kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation*, and the admonition not to slander angels.⁶⁵

Both Books keep All Saints Day, the 1549 prefacing the Collect with a prayer, using Revelation 7 as the reading which talks of the worship of God by all men and angels together.⁶⁶ The 1549 also changed the reading for Evensong from Sarum to Revelation 19:1-16, which again stresses the worship in heaven, but also has the

⁶⁵ Brightman pp.628-631

admonishment by the angel to John not to worship him since they were both servants of God. ⁶⁷ This was removed in 1552.

Holy Communion was probably the greatest bone of contention in both Prayer Books, and the differences in angelology expressed in the two are striking. After the appropriate Preface for the service, the priest was called to say:

Therefore with Angels and Archangels,
and with all the company of heaven:
we laude and magnify thy glorious name,
evermore, praising thee, and singing
Holy, Holy , Holy, Lorde God of Hosts,
heaven and earth are full of your glory. ⁶⁸

From here, it is at the consecration of the elements that the main difference between the angelologies of the two books arises. The following was omitted from the 1552 Book:

We beseech thee to accept this our bounden duty and service,
and commend these our prayers and supplications,
by the ministry of thy holy Angels,
to be brought up into thy holy tabernacle before the sight of thy divine
majesty. ⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Brightman pp.634/5

⁶⁷ Brightman pp.636/7

⁶⁸ Brightman pp.686/7

⁶⁹ Brightman pp.694/5

This strongly echoes the Patristic traditions of angels attending the liturgy and Mass, attracted by the Real presence of Christ, as well as the intercessory role of angels, whose very *ministry* is to commend men's *prayers and supplications* to God, and to take them into His presence.⁷⁰ Its removal in 1552 is not surprising, since Real Presence, Eucharistic devotion, and angelic mediation and intercession at the Mass would have all been utterly unacceptable to Continental Reformed thought.

A similar difference appears in the service of Matrimony, where 1549, following Sarum, uses the Apocryphal story of Tobias and Sara. It has a prayer of blessing for the newly weds which says:

Looke O lord, mercifully upon them from heaven and bless them:
And thou didst send thy Angel Raphael to Tobias and Sara,
to their great comfort.⁷¹

1552 removes this and replaces it with angel-less story of Abraham and Sara – again, not a surprising move since the Tobit reading implied the authoritative use of the Apocrypha, and direct angelic ministry by Raphael. Similar method and editing is shown in the *Visitation of the Sick*. Both Books have the prayer:

Visit him O Lord, as you did visit Peter's wife's mother, and the
Captain's servant.⁷²

⁷⁰ Chrysostom: De Sacr. 6:4, Adv. Anom 4: See pp.46-7 above.

⁷¹ Brightman pp.810/11

⁷² Brightman pp.622/3

The 1549 has an additional section immediately afterwards which said:

And as you preserved Tobias and Sara by thy Angel from danger
so restore unto this sick person his former health (if it be thy will).

As before, the removal was probably due to the Apocryphal reference, in addition to the implication of an angelic protection and healing ministry.

(C) The 42 Articles.

Of the 42 Articles, only one concerns our subject here - Article V *Of The Sufficiency of the Holy Scripture for Salvation*.⁷³ At this stage, the Apocrypha was not deemed uncanonical - this was to be made explicit in 1561, and affirmed in 1573. The 1552 Article, much expanded by 1573, has two things worth noting. First is that limits on what the Canon actually contains are not explicit, and so the Apocrypha, with all its angelic references is not officially sidelined, although in practice by 1552, it was – the elimination of Apocryphal citations in the 1552 BCP being a good indication of this. Second, is that the article says that that which is not plainly scriptural cannot be enforced upon the people, and not made central to salvation. However, if it is based in tradition and is profitable, then it need not be rejected and eliminated from the church, which potentially allows an entry in later years for ideas that, while not clear in Scripture, were not repugnant to it either, and had support from the Fathers. For

⁷³ E. Cardwell *Synodalia 1547-1717: Vol I* (Oxford University Press, 1842) p.20

example, the idea angels were created in the *light* phase of creation, while not having clear scriptural basis, is not actually repugnant to it, and has widespread Patristic support.

(D) Primers & Catechisms.

The 1553 Primer was a Reformed version of the 1543 Primer,⁷⁴ and though its publication so near to Edward's death means that it is hard to assess how widespread its use was, how it compares with the 1552 BCP is worth examining, since it adds a number of items. First, its Kalender strangely adds the Sarum feast of *Michaelis de Monte* (October 17th), which was omitted from the Prayer Books.⁷⁵ Even in the light of the 6th Article of 1552, it is difficult to see how this could be seen as a legitimate tradition, especially with no clear Biblical basis. Both the *Te Deum Laudamus* and the *Benedicte* note the worship of angels,⁷⁶ and the *Prayer In Time Of War* talks of the Lord's avenging angel being commanded to stop the punishment by God. The Collect for St. Michael and all Angels is the same, but one point of interest is in the *Prayer for the help of God's holy Angels*,⁷⁷ which asks for angelic assistance, as opposed to appealing directly to Christ for help, or for Him to send angels.

Also during Edward VI's reign, Thomas Becon (1511-67) wrote a Catechism (again, its use is difficult to assess), and he asserted a protective and interactive angelic

⁷⁴ Cuming p.86

⁷⁵ Sarum II:536ff

⁷⁶ Ed. J. Ketley *The Two Liturgies with other documents of the reign of Edward VI* (Cambridge University Press, 1844) p.388 & p.399

⁷⁷ Ibid. p.474-5

ministry.⁷⁸ (He was more Lutheran than many of his contemporaries, but later gained a Zwinglian influence to his thought.)⁷⁹ He criticised Catholic practice by condemning the honouring and serving of *angels, saints, or images*, saying that the angels and saints themselves reject such adoration.⁸⁰ More bluntly, Becon asserts that God will actively ignore prayers not directed to him alone, and they *shall obtain nothing of God*.⁸¹ However, Becon makes it plain that God sends angels in answer to prayer, and uses angelic obedience to illustrate the fact that men should be obedient to God – one example being Raphael accompanying Tobias on his journey.⁸²

The School Teacher's Catechism continued in the reforming mould, with the only point worth highlighting being a reference to angelic obedience being the model for human obedience in the exposition of the Lord's Prayer, which follows a Calvinist method of using angelology only as a theological tool to underpin other areas.⁸³

(4) Edwardian Reformers.

When Henry died many exiles returned home from Europe. These exiles had been exposed to a Continental Reformed theology, including Calvinism, a more radical scheme than the Lutheran influences of earlier Reformers and those who had remained in England.⁸⁴ Of all the issues surrounding the creation of a Protestant

⁷⁸ Becon II:584, 634

⁷⁹ D.S. Bailey *Thomas Becon* (London: Oliver & Boyd, 1952) p.105; ODCC p.176

⁸⁰ Becon II:58-9

⁸¹ Becon II:132

⁸² Becon II:155-8

⁸³ Brightman p.521

⁸⁴ W.P. Haugaard *Elizabeth and the English Reformation* (CUP, 1968) p.26; Neill p.62: See above pp.107ff

English Church, angelology came a long way behind issues such as the Mass, justification, ecclesiology, and the Cult of the Saints, so it is to be expected that little was written. Even though no systematic English angelology exists from this period, lines of thought can be identified, and a synoptic approach will be used to highlight these. As with earlier chapters, I will cover issues such as the angelic nature, fall, knowledge, ministry and Guardian Angels.⁸⁵

The sources used by the various writers can be identified by default. Becon and Bradford being the exceptions, there is no use of the Apocrypha in any of the discussions about angels. In a *Book of Private Prayers* (pub. 1559), John Bradford (1510-55) puts forward a prayer for those going on a journey, where he talks of Tobias and asks the *holy angels to pitch their tents about us*.⁸⁶ As previously noted, Becon uses the same passage for the same ends.⁸⁷

Generally, though, Scripture was the overarching rule by which all was judged, and Cranmer notes this well. In his *A Confutation of Unwritten Verities*, Cranmer twice attacks the Catholic stance on angels, both times saying that doctrine should be decided by Scripture with only secondary and subordinate support from the Fathers.⁸⁸

Consistent with a more Calvinist style approach, the use of the Fathers is not great; however, there are a handful of citations and allusions, and of these, a number are interesting. One would expect Augustine to figure highly, but strangely, he doesn't.

⁸⁵ All the sources used for the Edwardian and Elizabethan writers cited in this chapter are from the Parker Society Series – unless otherwise noted. Full bibliographic details are in the Bibliography. Dates of the writings will be given where known.

⁸⁶ Bradford I:235

⁸⁷ Becon II:155-8

For example, John Hooper (d. 1555), a Zwinglian, said that it is the Holy Spirit who gives angels life – an idea straight from Basil.⁸⁹ Roger Hutchinson (d.1555), mentions an idea that had been raised by Origen, and common in popular Mediaeval angelology, that perhaps the Christmas star was an angel.⁹⁰ Becon, on the other hand, cites Augustine and the idea of men making up the company of heaven. In *The Christmas Banquet*, he writes:

(God) had made man for to supply the number of angels, which perished when Lucifer fell from heaven.⁹¹

This idea finds no parallel in other contemporary thinkers in the Church of England. Taking a different tack, Bradford, in *Defence of Election*, in terms reminiscent of Augustine, talks of the angelic fall, and asks, why if God can foresee everything did the angels fall? Using predestination as his model, he says some were elected to fall, and some not to, but why this is so, man can never know.⁹² Cranmer's knowledge of the Fathers is often used to his advantage to attack Catholic practice, and while talking about the deity of the Holy Spirit, he says that Spirit is omnipresent, whereas created beings are not. Referencing Didymus the Blind, and Basil, Cranmer writes that all *creatures, visible and invisible, are circumscribed within one place*,⁹³ but Christ as God cannot be circumscribed within the Sacrament, and thus Transubstantiation cannot be true.

⁸⁸ Cranmer I:64 c.f. I:40

⁸⁹ Hooper II:40 c.f. De Sp. Sanct. 16

⁹⁰ Hutchinson p110; cf. Scott pp.140-1; Young II:30-31

⁹¹ Becon I:71 c.f. Aug.: En. 29

⁹² Bradford I:322 c.f. II:102 c.f. Aug.: De Cive XXII:9

⁹³ Cranmer I:97

These few references and allusions aside, Patristic references are noticeable by their absence, with Biblicism being a common basis for refuting arguments. Also common was the desire to correct Catholic errors, a central issue is the mediatory role of angels. In *The Displaying of the Popish Mass*, Becon condemns the use of angels as intercessors and makes the point that due to the mediators Christ is *utterly forgotten*.⁹⁴ Again, in the *Lord's Supper and the Popish Mass*, he attacks *masses in the honour of angels, of the archangels, of the apostles, of the confessors, of the martyrs*.⁹⁵ Hutchinson wrote that *the Trinity is only to be prayed to, to be worshipped, and not to saints departed, nor angels or archangels, since to honour them is idolatry and robbery*.⁹⁶

The attack moved into other areas. Hooper refuted the use of images, saying that even if *Gabriel the archangel descended from heaven, approved the use of images (his) authority should have no place*.⁹⁷ (Worth noting is that he calls Gabriel an archangel, thus maintaining the mediaeval tradition, not the plain words of scripture.) Bradford in his *Sermon of Repentance* (1553) asked *who dealt with sin? No angel, no saint, no archangel, no powers, no potestates, no creature in heaven, but only Christ*.⁹⁸ - a clear attack on mediation and the Dionysian scheme. Hugh Latimer (d.1555), a man of Lutheran tendencies, also gives short shrift to Dionysian speculation since such *obscure questions* could mislead *the ignorant and unlearned* – a Calvinist style attitude which questions whether men are capable of

⁹⁴ Becon III:263 c.f. Calvin: Inst. I:XIV:11

⁹⁵ Becon III:373

⁹⁶ Hutchinson p.205

⁹⁷ Hooper I:47

⁹⁸ Bradford I:63

coping with subjects such as angels.⁹⁹ He follows this by saying that even though God preserves *body and soul* from the devil by the ministry of angels *we are not bound to call upon angels*.¹⁰⁰ On a different tack, Latimer makes the point that Gabriel did not teach people to pray the Ave Maria, thus it should not be prayed.¹⁰¹ Further, John Philpot (d. 1555) also shows a Calvinist form of methodology by using angels as a tool to refute Catholic teaching. First, during disputations with Marian Catholics on the Mass, part of Philpot's argument against Real Presence is that angels declared that Christ had gone to heaven, thus He could not be physically present in the elements.¹⁰² Differently from Cranmer, he says that created beings, including angels, cannot be omnipresent, thus Christ's physical body cannot be, and thus Real Presence is false.¹⁰³

However, the approach wasn't wholly negative, and some positive attempts were made to talk about angels. What is interesting is the use of Scholastic categories, if not the scholastic desire for detailed argument and definition. Becon, for example, said that no chance to repent was given to the angels, and their choice to disobey or obey was confirmed at the moment they made it.¹⁰⁴

Hooper believed that spirits, both good and bad were created by God, *to be immortal*, and from their creation *to live forever*, and never to die. They were created to be perfect and good; *without hatred, displeasure, grudge, contumacy*,

⁹⁹ Latimer II:86 c.f. Calvin: Inst. I:XIV:11

¹⁰⁰ Latimer II:86-7

¹⁰¹ Latimer II:232

¹⁰² Philpot pp.194-6

¹⁰³ Philpot p.209 c.f. Hutchinson p.194

¹⁰⁴ Becon I:281

rebellion, disobedience, or pride against their Maker. ¹⁰⁵ Partly by their created nature, and partly by *grace and God's favour*, angels *persevere and continue in the perfection and excellency of their creation*, and they will now never fall, through means of Christ. This sounds similar to Basil, ¹⁰⁶ who also asserted an angelic nature that was perfect before their fall, except that Basil attributes the work of confirmation to the Spirit, not directly to Christ. Alternatively, Hutchinson said that angels, like men, both have immortality and confirmation given to them by God's grace. ¹⁰⁷ Regarding the angelic fall, Hutchinson sees that God foresaw Satan's fall, but this does not imply that God made Satan evil. Satan abused his freewill and made himself evil. God made men and angels good, not evil - angels made themselves evil – something that men should avoid. ¹⁰⁸

Hutchinson says that men are sinners, and while he admits that angels are involved in God's work of cleansing, ¹⁰⁹ he makes it clear that angels themselves do not forgive sin, but are merely conduits of God's forgiveness, ¹¹⁰ since it was not an angel who wrought redemption. ¹¹¹

In Hutchinson's major work *The Image of God* (1550), he describes how man was formed in spiritual perfection in the likeness of God, and *that in these we be like the angels*,¹¹² but he goes on to say that humans are like animals in as far as their physical existence is concerned, which also suggests that man's likeness to angels is

¹⁰⁵ Hooper II:70

¹⁰⁶ De Sp. Sanct. 16; Hom. 15:4

¹⁰⁷ Hutchinson p.62 c.f. Basil : De Sp. Sanct. 16

¹⁰⁸ Hutchinson p.67

¹⁰⁹ Hutchinson p.137

¹¹⁰ Hutchinson p.137

¹¹¹ Hutchinson p.143

¹¹² Hutchinson p.25

spiritual and moral. He continues by saying that *cherubim* means *fullness of knowledge*, and this is what the general term *angel* means – a similar reference to Pseudo Dionysius.¹¹³ Angels are *fullness of knowledge* and have a level of knowledge given by God that fills their beings totally,¹¹⁴ yet he also stresses the limitations on this extensive knowledge, since the *supernatural cannot be perceived with natural light*. Cherubim and seraphim are ignorant of the majesty of God, (which implicitly means they cannot mediate knowledge of Him down a hierarchy) and yet they have more knowledge than men because *they be pure minds, and were never blinded by sin, nor hindered through any earthly mansion and corruptible body*.¹¹⁵ Calling them *pure minds*, is an interesting point, since it sounds like Aquinas calling angels Intellectual Creatures.¹¹⁶

Providence and Guardian Angels were a bone of contention, but the fact that God used angels to protect men was never disputed.¹¹⁷ For example, Becon's *A Prayer for Soldiers* asks God to send an angel to *pitch his tent among them, and over throw their enemies*,¹¹⁸ and Latimer similarly affirms the point that God appoints his angels *to keep and save your children from all peril and danger*.¹¹⁹ Philpot too states that the angels of children are continually in God's presence,¹²⁰ and John Bale saw that angels are in *the presence of God, as ministers of acceptation, ready to*

¹¹³ Hutchinson p.27 c.f. Ps. Dion.: CH VII:1

¹¹⁴ Hutchinson p.134, 137-40

¹¹⁵ Hutchinson p.160

¹¹⁶ S.T. 1a:LIV:1-5

¹¹⁷ E.g. Becon III:218; Bradford I:353 c.f. I:454

¹¹⁸ Becon III:33

¹¹⁹ Latimer II:158 c.f. Origen: SOS 2:3, 8, 9

¹²⁰ Philpot p.275

execute his heavenly will and commandment, ¹²¹ and that angels are *ordained for man's comfort.* ¹²²

Becon showed a little more adventure in his thought, which is not surprising since he started writing in the early 1540s when Luther was the greater influence. For example, in *The Demands of Holy Scripture*, Becon defines an angel as *the messenger of God, by which God works with us, and in us, that is good, profitable, and commodius.* ¹²³ Here Becon says angels work *with* and *in us* for good – the idea of angels acting *in* men being one that Calvinists generally wouldn't be comfortable with, as that is the role of the Christ and the Spirit. Again, in a *Prayer For The Health Of The Body*, he writes Christians are *preserved of thy goodness by the ministry and service doing of thy holy angels,* ¹²⁴ which, in the light of his use of Tobit elsewhere, suggests Becon had a sympathy for the healing role of angels. ¹²⁵ In this light, it is no surprise to see him strongly affirm the presence of a protective angel *to wait upon us, that we may be oppressed with no evil.* ¹²⁶ He stops short talking of Guardian Angels, but the idea that an angel (singular, not plural) *waits on us*, points toward a more Lutheran line of thought.

Finally, in *The Flower of Godly Prayer*, Becon seems to aim at a re-orientation of thought. He cites Michael the Archangel defeating Satan, and makes a straight link between Michael and Christ in the defeat of Satan. He wrote:

¹²¹ Bale p.341; See below p.140

¹²² Bale p.414

¹²³ Becon III:605 – No exact date, but written during Edward's reign.

¹²⁴ Becon III:83

¹²⁵ Becon II:155-8

¹²⁶ Becon I:185

Thou art that Lord, which hath swallowed up hell. Thou art the King of Glory, by which thy death destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil. Thou art that Michael, which hast fought with the dragon and overcome him.¹²⁷

By equating the work of the two, this looks like a direct rejection of the Sarum tradition. Sarum made Michael the one who slew Satan and who protected men from death, but Becon attributes this directly to Christ and not Michael, as if it were a proactive attempt to return to Christ the roles that were rightfully His.¹²⁸

From here, one could expect that the role of angels in devotional life would have been pointed to. While not common, we do see it in Bradford's *Book of Private Prayers*. For instance, in a prayer before sleeping he asks for a heavenly dream as he sleeps which includes *thy angels and holy souls*.¹²⁹ Hutchinson also accepted that angels gave men messages in dreams,¹³⁰ and this idea of a vision of heaven is again taken up by Bradford in *A Sweet Contemplation of Heaven* where he looks toward the pure and glorious *heaven of saints and angels, and cherubim and seraphim*,¹³¹ where he *might sing with thy angels a new song*.¹³² Continuing in this line, in *Felicity of the Life to Come*, he writes of a heaven where *the archangels, angels, thrones, powers, dominations, cherubim, seraphim, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, virgins confessors and righteous spirits cease not to sing (your*

¹²⁷ Becon III:16-17 - No exact date, but written during Edward's reign.

¹²⁸ Sarum II:516-9

¹²⁹ Bradford I:242

¹³⁰ Hutchinson p.75

¹³¹ Bradford I:268

¹³² Bradford I:272 c.f. Philpot p.255

praise).¹³³ This is interesting because it mirrors the Litany of the 1549 Prayer Book, which was stripped back in the 1552 Book.¹³⁴

More common than a statement of how angels play a part in man's devotional life, is the general idea, not pushed by Calvin, of a joint society, where men and angels relate together. In *Against the Fear of Death*, Bradford encourages the reader by comparing and contrasting the wickedness of the earth, with *the new heaven and earth wherein righteousness shall dwell, where angels and archangels, and all God's people, yea, God Himself, hath his abiding and dwelling.*¹³⁵ (Becon also mentions in a *Thanksgiving after Supper*, men being with angels at the heavenly feast.)¹³⁶ Angels as part of the heavenly experience is important to Bradford, and he drives home the point, again using a list similar to the 1549 Litany, as those who will be worshipping in heaven together.¹³⁷ As we see, a striking feature of Bradford's angelology seems to be the strong relationship between angels and the Church, and a form of Beatific vision. Similarly, Becon often mentions men going to be with the angels and *blessed spirits* in heaven¹³⁸ including the vision of the heavenly Jerusalem where an angel guides St. John.¹³⁹

Hugh Latimer, when preaching to Edward VI on the Lord's Prayer, touched on this idea as well. During his Fourth Exposition - *Thy Will Be Done* (1552), Latimer explains that there is a coda - *As It Is In Heaven*. From here, Latimer says that there is

¹³³ Bradford I:274

¹³⁴ Brightman pp.174-5

¹³⁵ Bradford I:338

¹³⁶ Becon III:19 - No exact date, but written during Edward's reign.

¹³⁷ Bradford I:341

¹³⁸ Becon III:117; 124; 145; 148; 152-3;185

¹³⁹ Becon III:185

a spiritual heaven and a temporal heaven, and the spiritual heaven is where angels are, fully doing God's will. Latimer argues that this means that men should desire to do God's will perfectly, just as the angels do, since angels are prime examples of conscientious service to God. Using Biblical examples, he says how one can see *how obedient angels are, therefore let us endeavour ourselves to do his will and pleasure.*¹⁴⁰

This use of angels as a picture of obedience to God, while used in Scholastic thought, and linked to a hierarchical conception of the universe and society, is developed by the Protestant thinkers.¹⁴¹ For example, Latimer commended all men to do as the angels do. For example, when asked to do a task angels do it *diligently* and *quickly*. Angels do not *spend the time in loitering and lewdness, as the common sorts of servants do in these days, clean contrary to the example of these angels of God, which returned to God immediately after their message was done.*¹⁴² Yet Latimer wants to push this idea further:

Whensoever or wheresoever the word of God is preached, there are the angels present, which keep in safe custody all those which receive the word of God, and study to live after it. Thus it is meet for us to come with great reverence to the word of God, where himself with his angels are present.¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ Latimer I:387

¹⁴¹ Aquinas: S.T. 1a:CVIII:A:5-8; Ps. Dion.: CH I:3

¹⁴² Latimer II:85-86 c.f. II:90-91, 119

¹⁴³ Latimer II:86

This highlights a number of issues. To begin with, while Patristic thought tended to cite angelic involvement at the Mass and within a sacramental setting,¹⁴⁴ and Sarum saw angels as making the Mass efficacious to men, here Latimer, going beyond the modifications of the 1549 and 1552 Prayer Books, makes angelic involvement centred on preaching (an idea also in Origen),¹⁴⁵ protecting the hearers, presumably to then make the preaching effective in men's lives. Angels now become a tool for moving away from a sacramental faith, to a preaching based faith. Second, is that angelic assistance is for those who have already received God's word, which minimises the idea that angels are involved in the prompting and moving of people toward faith, as the Patristic and Sarum traditions suggest.¹⁴⁶

(A slight tangent to this is in Myles Coverdale's (1487-1569) sermons on the death and resurrection of Christ (written during the 1540s), where the angel, a (heavenly) messenger of his resurrection was a proclaimer of the resurrection, and commanded the women to spread the message of the resurrection to disciples. The women were frightened, however, the angel comforted them, and sent them out to proclaim the message.¹⁴⁷ The idea the angel commissioned the women to go and spread the Gospel, was seemingly removed from the Prayer Books, but Coverdale had no problem with it.)¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁴ Chrysostom: De Sacr. 6:4; Greg. Nyssa: Poem 2:529; Or. XI : See pp.46-7 above.

¹⁴⁵ Origen: Hom Lk. 23:7-8

¹⁴⁶ c.f. The masses of Raphael and Gabriel in Sarum (II:222ff) c.f. Greg. Nyssa: Life of Moses 2:46; Basil: Comm. Is. 8:207; Origen: Comm. Matt. 13:28

¹⁴⁷ Coverdale I:322ff

¹⁴⁸ See p.125 above.

Regarding angelic assistance in death, the only references are vague. Becon talks of men joining angels in heaven in the *Prayer for the Departing Out of this World*,¹⁴⁹ and in the *Prayer At The Point of Death* he talks of Christians being confessed to be faithful before both God and the angels.¹⁵⁰ Coverdale uses angels assisting Lazarus to Abraham's bosom as an example of God's help for men,¹⁵¹ and compares this world to heaven by saying men will *be in the company of angels*,¹⁵² but it is a long way short of what we saw in Sarum and other traditions. Finally, Nicholas Ridley, just before his martyrdom in 1555, had the confidence he would *after this temporal and momentary miseries, to have eternal joy and perpetual felicity with Abraham, Isaac, Peter and Paul, and all the blessed company of the angels in heaven*.¹⁵³

To round off this section, it is worth looking at John Bale (1495-1563), the Bishop of Ossory during Edward VI's reign, and a man who fought vigorously for the reformation ideals with a *literary savagery* matched by few of his contemporaries.¹⁵⁴ His commentary on the *Apocalypse of John* takes as its premise that Rome is the antichrist and the source of all evil.¹⁵⁵ The most interesting aspect to this work is how he demystifies and strips down the text to the extent that he sees most of the references to angels as not being to angels but to humans, or the Holy Spirit. He created an angelology that was bare and sparse, built around an extreme Reformed methodology reminiscent of Calvin, where angelic ministry is radically minimised, and angelology is simply a tool to attack the Papacy and Catholicism.

¹⁴⁹ Becon III:69

¹⁵⁰ Becon III:68

¹⁵¹ Coverdale II:77

¹⁵² Coverdale II:116f

¹⁵³ Ridley p.360

¹⁵⁴ ODCC p.146

In the Preface Bale says that *Christ now glorified committed the Apocalypse unto the Holy Ghost, which here is called an angel or a messenger.* ¹⁵⁶ He then asserts that the angels of the churches are simply preachers and church leaders - a clear rejection of the Patristic and Catholic tradition. ¹⁵⁷ This idea is recurring, with the seven angels who blow the trumpets being preachers, ¹⁵⁸ and, again, learned men who defend the Gospel are *strong angels.* ¹⁵⁹ In fact, the meaning of angel shifts as he moves through the text. For example, the four angels at the four-corners of the earth were not *sent of God* but were *angels of darkness* because they held back the wind (i.e. the Spirit), ¹⁶⁰ and stopped the *free passage of the gospel.* ¹⁶¹ These angels were then challenged by another angel *of diverse nature from them; for he was the true messenger of God.* ¹⁶² Again, Bale calls the seven angels (of a lower nature) the *universal preachers of God's verity (with) full authority given by the Lord.* ¹⁶³ When referring to chapter 12 and the war between Michael and Satan, again we see a strongly symbolic approach, where Michael is cited as the Spirit, ¹⁶⁴ but which Bale reinterprets to say that Michael symbolises all the world's true preachers, and the angels are the faithful who confess God. ¹⁶⁵ (In contrast, Becon saw Michael as Christ, not the Spirit.) ¹⁶⁶ The devil and his angels are false teachers and we are

¹⁵⁵ A. Milton *Catholic And Reformed* (CUP, 1995) p.103

¹⁵⁶ Bale p.252

¹⁵⁷ Bale p.273 also 276, 278, 281, 285, 289, 293, 305 c.f. Origen Hom. Lk 12 :4; Greg. Naz.: Th. Or. II :31; Aquinas: S.T.1a: CXIII :A 1-7

¹⁵⁸ Bale pp.343-358, 67-69

¹⁵⁹ Bale p.367 c.f. p400, 475, 518

¹⁶⁰ Bale p.331

¹⁶¹ Bale p.332

¹⁶² Bale p.332

¹⁶³ Bale p.343

¹⁶⁴ Bale p.441 c.f. 623/34

¹⁶⁵ Bale p.412

¹⁶⁶ Becon I:185

commanded *to shun the suggestions of his angels*,¹⁶⁷ which probably has the underlying Biblical idea of Satan as an angel (preacher) of light, who would seduce men back to Catholicism.

This shifting view of what angels are meant to be (literal or symbolic, men, angels, the Spirit or Christ), perhaps finds partial resolution when Bale describes the true church as a place where *angels are not secluded (from men), being their fellow servants*.¹⁶⁸ It is also hinted at by a strange passage where men become angels, but the context suggests that this when they become preachers.¹⁶⁹

We see a similar idea in Becon, and he uses the picture to exhort obedience to church leaders. In *A General Prayer that all Men may walk in their Vocation and Calling* he writes:

Grant that the parishioners may reverence the bishops and other spiritual ministers, giving them no less honour that the child giveth his father, remembering that they be angels of God, the messengers of Christ, the light of the world, the salt of the earth, the dispensators of the mysteries of God, the feeders of their souls, the comforters of the weak, the physicians of the sick, the upholders of the whole, exhorters unto virtue, the frayers from vice, which watch continually for the health of their souls.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁷ Bale p.417

¹⁶⁸ Bale p.432

¹⁶⁹ Bale p.552

¹⁷⁰ Becon III:37 c.f. Sarum II:222-6, 516-9 - Probably written during Edward's reign.

We have already seen that Becon made efforts to re-attribute the roles attributed by Sarum to Michael to Christ, and it seems he is again trying here to give a whole host of angelic roles to human ministers, in an effort to avert men's eyes from traditional Catholic angelic ministry.¹⁷¹ Along with Cranmer in the Prayer Books,¹⁷² there seems to be a proactive attempt to address the over-development of angelology.

Latimer offers further light on the subject. When talking of the Christmas story, he said that the role of the angels is to serve and keep men. He then asks:

But now you will say, how chanced it that the angels teach not us as well as they did the shepherds? Sirs, you must understand that God hath appointed other officers which shall teach us the way to heaven.¹⁷³

These officers are the human preachers and teachers. The role of angels is diminished here and God now does not use angels to communicate His message, but uses preachers instead, and this attitude of attributing the angelic role of mediaeval Catholicism to ministers and preachers appears to strongly underpin Bale's, and others', thinking.

¹⁷¹ Becon I:255: See pp.88-90 above.

¹⁷² See pp.127-8 above.

(5) Angelology In Legal And Religious Documents from 1559 - 1578.

Elizabeth came to the throne in 1558, and throughout the first half of her reign fought to find a settlement that brought peace, if not harmony, to the nation. The main documents of the period were firstly a new Book of Common Prayer (1559) along with a New Primer (1559). During the 1560s there was an updated Book of Homilies (1562), plus a Book of Private Prayers (1566). The 1570s brought Nowell's Catechism (1st Ed. 1563, but published finally in 1570), the 39 Articles (1571), and lastly The Book of Christian Prayers (1578). It is worth noting that after 1578, nothing official of any significance was published, even though the religious situation was far from settled.

(A) The Prayer Book and Primer (1559).

The new Book Of Common Prayer was published in spring 1559, and was a Calvinist settlement more in favour of the 1552 than 1549 Prayer Book. ¹⁷⁴ In areas such as Holy Communion it differed slightly from the 1552, but as far as angelology is concerned they are identical. ¹⁷⁵

The Primer of 1559 differs little from those of Edward's reign, yet contains an angelology not wholly in tune with the 1552 or 1559 Prayer Books, having the feeling more of the Lutheran 1549 Book with a more sympathetic view of angelic ministry. It starts by retaining *St. Michael & All Angels* in its Kalender, and then lists a number of

¹⁷³ Latimer II:118

¹⁷⁴ Harrison & Sansom p.46

set prayers. In a morning prayer is the Apocryphal story of Tobias who had God's *holy Angel and messenger to be his guide.* ¹⁷⁶ However, this is followed by a prayer for the Spirit, not an angel, to be the guide. Again, in a prayer for one in captivity we read that:

All saints, as well angels as men, make suit (i.e. intercede) for me, desiring thee for my comfort. They shall not cease until they obtain their request. ¹⁷⁷

This again appears to be far more in tune with the Henrician attitude where angels are asked to intercede on men's behalf, as well as be a comfort. ¹⁷⁸

(B) Book of Homilies (1562) and Prayers & Meditations (1566).

In 1562, a new set of homilies were added to those given in Edward's reign, and as with the initial set of homilies, angels do not figure largely, yet are not totally ignored. In a *Homily on the Nativity*, the angel Gabriel is said to be one who witnessed and gave testimony to Christ, but was not involved in the conception. ¹⁷⁹ In an *Exhortation to Repentance* angels bringing judgement are used as a tool to support a different discussion. ¹⁸⁰ The last reference comes in *A Sermon against Wilful*

¹⁷⁵ Ed. J. Booty *The Book of Common Prayer 1559* (London: The Elizabethan Prayer Book Association, University Press, 1982)

¹⁷⁶ Ed. W. Keatinge Clay *Private Prayers of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth* (Parker Society) p.88

¹⁷⁷ Ibid. p.93

¹⁷⁸ See p.99, 101, 103, 105 above.

¹⁷⁹ *Sermons or Homilies Appointed to be read in Churches* (London: Prayer Book and Homily Society, 1833) p.279 c.f. p.318

¹⁸⁰ Ibid. p.367

Rebellion based around a discussion of the angelic fall, and if angels are primarily a tool to encourage obedience of the people. The very opening phrase of the homily says that God has *appointed His Angels and heavenly creatures in all obedience to serve and honour His Majesty*. Angels appeared in the *original Kingdom* and *withal the felicity and blessed state, which Angels, man, and all creatures had remained in, had they continued in due obedience*.¹⁸¹ Simply, obedience is exemplified by the angels, and disobedience and rebellion by Satan and the demons.

One of the most popular devotional books of Elizabeth's reign was that compiled by Henry Bull, called *Christian Prayers and Holy Meditations*, published in 1566.¹⁸² It is a fascinating work when compared with other Anglican works of the time, being far more positive with regard angels as a part of daily life. The introduction says that since men live and pray in the presence of God and His angels, one must consider carefully how one acts and speaks,¹⁸³ which has echoes of not only Luther, but also writers such as Tertullian,¹⁸⁴ and it provides a canvas upon which Bull can build an angelology divergent from that of the broad Calvinist tradition. Talking of the Lord's Prayer, Bull says that God confirms the believer, yet other things confirm him too, such as *the creation and government of the world generally, and of every creature particularly; for all is made and kept for man*.¹⁸⁵ Indirectly, angels are said to be for the benefit and blessing of man, and his exposition continues with an

¹⁸¹ Ibid. p.384

¹⁸² Collected by H. Bull *Christian Prayers and Holy Meditations, as well for Private and Public Exercises* (Parker Society, 1842)

¹⁸³ Bull p. xiv

¹⁸⁴ Tert: De Or. 16; Cyprian: De Or. 32:53

¹⁸⁵ Bull p.12

affirmation that God rules all things, including angels, ¹⁸⁶ and that in heaven angels of *reverent love do (God's) will and commandment with comfortable courage and joyful pleasure* - an example mankind are bound to follow. ¹⁸⁷

Moving away from the exposition of the Lord's Prayer, Bull lays down a number of prayers to be used at various times, and again, a throwback to a more positive Lutheran position is noticeable. In an evening prayer we read *grant the guard of thy good angels to keep the same this night and or evermore.* ¹⁸⁸ Just before going to sleep, one is to pray that one will see heaven in one's dreams *where thy angels and holy souls be most happy citizens* ¹⁸⁹ - and in a prayer after a meal we read of the heavenly feast where God will *place us in thy joyful kingdom amongst thy holy angels.* ¹⁹⁰ This very much mirrors Luther's idea of angels being a practical part of everyday devotion, and to be acknowledged as such.

Moving away from a Calvinist approach again, in a prayer to be said before a journey, which is similar to Sarum's *Service for Pilgrims*, Bull cites Tobias, and the reader is asked to pray:

Merciful Father, send to thy servants and men of simple hearts thine holy angels to be their keepers, as guides, and elder brethren to watch on thy weak children ... For thine own goodness' sake send thine holy angels to pitch their tents about us; to hide and defend us from Satan and his slaves; to carry us in their hands, that we may come not

¹⁸⁶ Bull p.22

¹⁸⁷ Bull pp.42-3

¹⁸⁸ Bull p.53

¹⁸⁹ Bull p.77

further into any danger than thou wilt deliver us out of. ... His angels are minister for them that be heirs of salvation. ¹⁹¹

This prayer would not have been out of place in either Sarum or a Catholic primer, and if one wanted a Biblical reference, then the angels sent with Abraham's servant would have served just as well – Gen. 24:7. Also, to ask for angelic protection for men of simple hearts, would sound dangerous in Continental Reformed ears, where men are not able to rightly view angelic ministry. ¹⁹² Similarly incongruous is a *Prayer for the avoiding all kinds of Sin* where one prays to remain under God's protection by His holy angels. ¹⁹³ It shows a non-Calvinist ideal, since there is no direct invocation of Christ for protection from sin, but one asks angels for protection. The only time caution applied is in a prayer before Communion where one is to affirm the greatness of God and Christ by saying that angels could not have provided the sacrifice God required. ¹⁹⁴

**(C) Nowell's Catechism (1570), The 39 Articles (1571),
and The Book of Prayers (1578)**

Nowell's Catechism was widely used to teach the newly Protestant nation the new faith, ¹⁹⁵ and was cited in Clerical and Lay Injunctions as the Catechism to use. ¹⁹⁶ In contrast to Bull, its angelology is sparse and has the sense of a Calvinist hand being involved. It affirms that angels exist and are created by God as incorporeal spirits, and

¹⁹⁰ Bull p.57

¹⁹¹ Bull p.68 c.f. Sarum II:166-173

¹⁹² Calvin: Inst. I:XIV:11

¹⁹³ Bull p.181

¹⁹⁴ Bull p.90

¹⁹⁵ Ed. G.E. Corrie *A Catechism written in Latin and English* (Parker Society, 1853)

¹⁹⁶ Grindal p142, 152

that He did not create them evil, but they fell due to their own sin and rebellion, and the demons have no hope of restoration.¹⁹⁷ The Catechism also demands that prayer is to God and God alone, since *it is a token of sure infidelity ... to pray to and crave help from angels ... for calling upon whom there is not one word in the holy scriptures.*¹⁹⁸ Lastly, besides touching on the Annunciation, men are called to be obedient to God just as the angels are, without any word of dissent or doubt.¹⁹⁹

The Thirty Nine Articles were published in 1571, and, as before, the only noteworthy point is the explicit exclusion of the Apocrypha by Article VI. This was probably just giving official sanction to commonly accepted practice – even though, as we have seen, as late as 1566, Bull was citing it.²⁰⁰

A Book of Christian Prayers, published in 1578, contains only two references of note. First, following Bull, the Prayer before Communion says that angels are incapable of freeing men from the bondage of sin - only Christ can do this.²⁰¹ Second is a version of the Litany at the end of the book which has no reference to angels at all - in contrast to the 1549 Book of Common Prayer, yet consistent with the 1552 and 1559 Books.²⁰²

¹⁹⁷ Corrie op. cit, pp.146-7

¹⁹⁸ Ibid. p.185 c.f. p.191

¹⁹⁹ Ibid. p.152, 197

²⁰⁰ *Sermons or Homilies Appointed to be read in Churches* pp.425-6

²⁰¹ Keatinge Clay op. cit, p.517

(6) Angels in the thought of the Elizabethan Apologists (1559-1590)

While official literature gives some indication of how thought was developing, the other writings of the period show much growth. There was a growing sophistication in the arguments, a wider application of angelology, and much more use of the Fathers, an approach which is demonstrated by Bullinger.

(A) The Angelology of Henriech Bullinger.

Henreich Bullinger (1504-75), a Swiss German of Zwinglian and Calvinist leanings, was very important in early English reforming thought,²⁰³ and he gave refuge to many exiles, who were subsequently heavily influenced by him – such as Hooper, Jewel, Parkhurst, Whitgift, Pilkington, and Cole.²⁰⁴ His initial influence was Luther, but he soon came under Zwingli and succeeded him after his death. He was a moderate, well grounded in the Fathers, whose irenic personality sought agreement among the reformed churches.²⁰⁵ His major English works are his *Decades*, a series of fifty sermons divided into five sections of ten.²⁰⁶ Bullinger was consulted during various controversies during both Edward's and Elizabeth's reigns,²⁰⁷ and in 1586, Archbishop Whitgift said all ministers should have his *Decades* in their possession, of

²⁰² Ibid. p.548

²⁰³ P. Dawley *John Whitgift and the English Reformation* (Charles Scribner & Sons, 1954) pp.212-8

²⁰⁴ Bullinger I:viii, IV:xiii

²⁰⁵ J. Wayne Baker *Heinrich Bullinger and the Covenant* (Ohio University Press, 1980) pp. xii - xxi

²⁰⁶ They were published in English in 1577, and revised in 1584 and 1589; c.f. Bullinger I:vii; Neill pp.127-8

²⁰⁷ ODCC pp.249-50; White p.80

which one sermon should be read over every week.²⁰⁸ With regard his angelology, it seems that while some areas of his thought he was influenced by Zwingli, Calvin and Reformed European theologians in general, in others he was did not always agree fully with his contemporaries.²⁰⁹ It will become clear that in his angelology he did not follow the minimalist line of many of his time, and he appears to have retained a Lutheran style positivity in his thought which led to an approach independent of his contemporaries.

In Bullinger's sermon *Of Good and Evil Spirits; That is; of the Holy Angels of God, and of Devils or Evil Spirits; and of their Operations*, the ninth of the Fourth Decade, we get a detailed exposition of his angelology.²¹⁰ To start with, Bullinger was in no doubt that the area of angels required serious study, simply because they are an integral part of Scripture – an approach in stark contrast to that of Calvin. Bullinger makes two initial points of profound importance. First, he says:

Since the holy scripture delivers us an assured doctrine (of angels) and in all points profitable, it seems that *we ought not lightly regard it, but with as much faith and diligence as we can bring it to light.*²¹¹

In contrast, Calvin only looked at that which is *distinct and explicit*.²¹² Second:

²⁰⁸ Bullinger I:viii

²⁰⁹ White *Predestination* pp.76-77, 80

²¹⁰ Bullinger III:327ff

²¹¹ Bullinger III:327 – my italics.

²¹² Calvin: Inst. I:XIV:3

It were a foul fault in him that studied after godliness, to be ignorant of the dispositions of good and evil angels, of whom so often mention is made in the holy scriptures.

Again, the exact opposite of Calvin who cited godliness in the *willing ignorance* of angels.²¹³

For Bullinger, since Scripture is the word of God, and since Scripture never teaches anything that is of no use, then men must take seriously the fact that angels are a recurring theme. But further than that, one must with *faith and diligence* investigate the area to shed some light on it, since it would be an error if someone who wanted to study the Scriptures ignored them. As we will see, Bullinger's method is only to avoid investigation only of things *not* mentioned at all in Scripture. Those things mentioned without detail are still worthy of investigation, if with some caution applied to the results.

This positive approach is immediately seen when Bullinger states the various possible meanings of the word angel that Scripture uses. It can mean an ambassador, messenger or human preacher, but the most general use is as *the blessed spirits of God*, which is evidence enough not to reject their existence, as that would reject the authority of Scripture.²¹⁴ Even *heathen philosophers and poets* accepted their existence, and they have appeared to men, thus by the word of *Holy Scripture* and *manifold experience*, one must confess their existence.

²¹³ Bullinger III:327 c.f. Inst. I:XIV:3

²¹⁴ Bullinger III:327-8

Regarding their nature, Bullinger again takes a different course from Calvin, saying that *it cannot be directly and perfectly expounded*, however, some things can be *after a sort, according to our capacity, shadowed out*. Clearly, shadows are not worthless, and Bullinger implies that man is not ²¹⁵ hopelessly sinful that his capacity for worthwhile investigation is eliminated, as Calvin intimated. ²¹⁵ Noting a couple of definitions of angels, Bullinger suggests the definition that *angels are good spirits, heavenly, incorruptible substances created for the ministry or service of God and men*. ²¹⁶ The next sections point to Bullinger's mind, where he uses scholastic categories as a structure for his discussion, recognising the validity of the categories, if not their answers. This is, again, in contrast to Calvin, who only noted scholastic categories in order to criticise them.

Angels were created by God, and he cites Epiphanius and Augustine. ²¹⁷ *plus ancient and learned Christians, who say that Scripture says nothing of how and when* From here Bullinger sets some exegetical limits, saying that *one cannot, without danger, expound that which is not talked of in Scripture, and if it is not mentioned then it is not dangerous to be ignorant of it. It is sufficient that men thank God that He created them, and live angel-like lives in honour of God*. ²¹⁸

In another area of his *Decades, Sin and the kinds thereof*, Bullinger says that God made all the angels good and placed his truth in them. He required truth, faith and fidelity from them. Satan, as an angel, was also created in truth and goodness, but

²¹⁵ Bullinger III:328 c.f. Inst. I:XIV:11

²¹⁶ Bullinger III:328 c.f. II:154-5

²¹⁷ Epiphanius: Adv. Haer. II:2, Aug: Gen. Lit. 3

²¹⁸ Bullinger III:329

degenerated from his nature and fell into a corrupt nature.²¹⁹ In *Of God's Providence* he quotes Tertullian saying that angels were *above the firmament, which cannot be seen by human eyes. God ordained angels, then spiritual virtues, and then he placed thrones and powers.*²²⁰ While little concrete can be taken from this quote, it seems that Bullinger accepts that there are many types of angelic beings. (His discussion of how angels may be organised comes later.)

As to their nature, angels are heavenly, incorruptible, and swift spirit creatures with essence or being, and not simply motions of the mind.²²¹ In another place, Bullinger describes angels as the *signification of an element, signifying air, wind, breath.* Biblical metaphors are used to describe bodiless substances, and spirit therefore signifies an angel, either good or bad.²²² Ultimately though, what angels are, others have *perhaps better declared, for which I bear no man a grudge.* Bullinger does not condemn investigation and speculation on the issue, but neither does he urge a position upon anybody.

Tentatively, he says angels are good, not due to their confirmed nature, but because of their activity of stirring up and furthering men to do good. Being substances, angels (of an indeterminate *fiery* nature) are limited in time and space, and so not bodiless, as this would give them an attribute of God. They do not have bodies in any physical meaning of the term, and though some eminent Christians (Scholastic and Patristic)

²¹⁹ Bullinger II:371

²²⁰ Bullinger III:176

²²¹ Bullinger III:329-330

²²² Bullinger III:298

had said they had bodies, Bullinger puts this down to a clumsy use of language, as opposed to any true doctrinal error on their part.²²³

Angels can take on physical human form, and do so due to man's weakness of capacity to cope with an angel in its true form. What happens to this body after the manifestation is *very hard to declare*,²²⁴ and Bullinger quotes Augustine to this effect,²²⁵ and also says that the fact angels appear in dreams doesn't mean they can't manifest themselves in physical form too.²²⁶ To discuss this is not *unfruitful*, according to Augustine, and if one does not insist on positions, *we may be ignorant of (it) without blame*.²²⁷

Again, using Augustine and others liberally,²²⁸ Bullinger affirms the angel's God-given incorruptible nature and unchangability, although he notes that only God is truly unchanging. Angels are incorruptible, eternally confirmed, and never sin, and forever look upon God as a reward for not falling, and here is an indication of what it means to be like the angels – it is a state of life, not of nature. Angels do not marry or have gender, nor can they die or be killed, be divided, increase or decrease.²²⁹ Angels are incredibly swift, and can travel from heaven to earth in the blink of an eye, at the moment of prayer, responding in an instant, and are never diverted from a mission.²³⁰ Angels cannot be limited in their movements, but do not simply appear in one place

²²³ Bullinger III:330: See pp.29-30 above.

²²⁴ Bullinger III:331

²²⁵ Aug.: Ench. 59

²²⁶ c.f. Bullinger II:61

²²⁷ Bullinger III:331-2

²²⁸ Aug: Eccles. Dog.11-12; Ad Pec. Diac. de Fide 23; Ench 59; Def. Ecc. 61; Theodoret: Div. Dec. V:7

²²⁹ Bullinger III:332-3

²³⁰ Bullinger III:334 c.f. II:96

and then another, but need to travel to the place in question.²³¹ It is within this context that Bullinger affirms the reality of the angelic ministry toward the soul at death found in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus.²³² Angels are powerful and strong, and *there is nothing in the whole course of nature that can withstand the ministers of the almighty God. For angels are not called powers and virtues for nought.*²³³ As for angels' knowledge, being creatures it is necessarily limited, but is far beyond that of mankind, and it is enough to know that it is tailored for them to be able to fulfil their roles – whatever that might be.²³⁴

Talking of the number and organisation of angels in heaven, in contrast to the negativity shown by Calvin, Bullinger say that divines have *wittily and wisely* disputed the question. Scripture says they are innumerable – which suffices as an answer for Bullinger, and he then describes the Dionysian hierarchy, saying how many try to describe this fully. Bullinger, though, cites Augustine who says that he doesn't know, but interestingly says that these groupings are an *undoubted truth*, but the exact distinctions are unknowable.²³⁵ Bullinger draws a line here, and says that while Scripture teaches all things *healthful and necessary*, it says nothing about this particular subject so we should not *busily and curiously search* after it. However, he still makes the point that *we cannot deny, that those names (or orders of angels) are expressed in the holy scriptures*. The problem is that because of man's *weakness, it is meet after a sort to expound them*,²³⁶ almost

²³¹ Bullinger III:335

²³² Bullinger III:335

²³³ Bullinger III:335

²³⁴ Bullinger III:336

²³⁵ Bullinger III:336-7; Aug.: Ench 58; Ad. Orosium contra Origenist

²³⁶ Bullinger III:337

as if due to man's weakness, they must investigate it to ensure they get it right.

Bullinger then carefully describes some of the ranks.

Angels are the messengers and ambassadors of God, and Archangels are those which deliver the more important messages. Thrones are called so because they always stand around the throne of God, or because He has his seat among the angels. Lordships, Principalities and Powers execute God's government, and exercise God's power in the world.²³⁷ Powers relate to the armies of heaven; Cherubim are so called probably because of their wisdom, as says Jerome;²³⁸ and Seraphim, either because they are fervent, or because they are pure and clear fire who burn with love for God.

The section describing angelic ministry builds on the base provided by these definitions.²³⁹ First, God doesn't have to use angels, but chooses to do so out of His goodness. God created them to *partake in everlasting life and salvation*. Their ministry to men is framed to individual men's capacities and dispositions, and God uses them to introduce men to the Gospel, yet Bullinger is clear that the work of conversion is of the Spirit alone, though God could have used angels if He so chose.²⁴⁰ This means angels love men, but there could have been no other way, for if they love God then they will naturally also love His Creation.²⁴¹ Angels are obedient and impassible, but are glad and rejoice as Scripture suggests, implying they have emotion. In the midst of this section, Bullinger takes a detour and makes the point that one's mind *must be lifted up to higher things, and spiritual things must be*

²³⁷ Bullinger III:338

²³⁸ Jerome: Ep. 50

²³⁹ Bullinger III:338

²⁴⁰ Bullinger III:339 c.f. IV:95 c.f. I:153, III:388

²⁴¹ Bullinger III:340

spiritually judged, meaning that only the spiritually minded can understand what scripture truly says about angels. This, then, implies that those who do not, cannot, or will not understand what the Bible says about angels are not truly spiritually minded.

Returning to the subject of ministry, angels are to worship God, and to lead men to do the same.²⁴² They love truth and so promote it within men, and hinder those who try to block it - especially those who teach false doctrine.²⁴³ Elsewhere, *On the Word of God*, says angels are used by God to communicate with men, and this was true especially during the Old Testament period, but since Christ came, He became the dominant method of proclaiming the Gospel. Christ is the mouthpiece God uses, but angels, prophets and apostles also have a role.²⁴⁴

Angels watch for men's safety, tell them of forthcoming dangers, and comfort the afflicted.²⁴⁵ Furthermore, they execute God's wrath and judgement.²⁴⁶ Regarding Guardian Angels, Bullinger cites a whole range of Scriptures which point that way, saying that angels *defend men, are our keepers, ensure that no adversity happens unto us, and guide us in our ways*,²⁴⁷ after which he states that *little children have angels without doubt to be their keepers*,²⁴⁸ as did the Apostles in Acts.²⁴⁹ Again, in line with scholastic thought, he recognises that angels have responsibility over certain geographical areas, and there is no *variance or disagreement in heaven, neither that there are conflicts or battles fought*

²⁴² Bullinger III:340

²⁴³ Bullinger III:341

²⁴⁴ Bullinger I:38-9 c.f. Latimer II:118

²⁴⁵ Bullinger III:341-2

²⁴⁶ Bullinger III:342 c.f. IV:126

²⁴⁷ Bullinger III:342

²⁴⁸ Bullinger III:343

between angels.²⁵⁰ Nevertheless, Bullinger does not commit himself as to whether Guardian Angels exist, but in *Of the Holy Catholic Church* he points to a doctrine where angels and men together compromise the Church – indicating a close relationship, at any rate.²⁵¹ Yet this idea of closeness seems to have been abused by Rome, since when Bullinger talks of Peter being given the power of the keys, he says this does not include authority over the angels in heaven.²⁵²

Now, only at the end of the exposition *Of Good And Evil Spirits*, does Bullinger start to truly apply any caution. His first word of warning is regarding the idea of angels being involved in a mediated faith. He writes:

We must take heed lest, contrary to the nature of true religion, we attribute too much to angels; that we worship them not; that we call not upon them, nor serve them.²⁵³

One must not confuse situations where angels are sent in response to prayer to God, for example to Peter in prison, for the need to pray to angels directly.²⁵⁴ Prayer should not be made to the saints or angels but only to God.²⁵⁵ Angels should not be honoured, as they are merely God's instruments. God rules the world and angels are just his officers.²⁵⁶ True, Scripture sometimes appears to blur the distinction between God and angels, but the entire testimony of the Bible (Apocrypha included) attests to

²⁴⁹ Bullinger III:343

²⁵⁰ Bullinger III:343-4

²⁵¹ Bullinger IV:35

²⁵² Bullinger IV:44

²⁵³ Bullinger III:344

²⁵⁴ Bullinger IV:226 c.f. 179

²⁵⁵ Bullinger IV:172

the subordination of angels to God, even when angels do amazing acts, and that only God is to be worshipped and served.²⁵⁷ This position is then bolstered by a series of Patristic quotes, including Lactantius, but mainly Augustine, which attest that none in the early church approved the veneration or worship of angels.²⁵⁸ Elsewhere, he authoritatively quotes Pope Pashasius who said that it was blasphemous to believe in any created being.²⁵⁹ Quoting Augustine, Bullinger finishes by saying that men are not blessed by seeing angels, but should worship God, although men ought to love angels as fellow servants of God who love one another.²⁶⁰ Angels cannot effect salvation, and so to worship and invoke them is heresy, as the Fathers clearly attest.²⁶¹

It is interesting to note that his attack on the Catholic practice of invoking saints and angels is not a major part of his exposition, nor is it in other sermons. Only in *Calling upon the only God* is it fully addressed, where he says that neither saints or angels ask for such veneration, and it would only be demons who would do so.²⁶² Only Christ meets the requirement of God as an intercessor, and angels are incapable of it.²⁶³

What is noticeable about Bullinger, is that he is much more positive and irenic in his approach, and he roots this in a desire to take seriously the testimony of Scripture – especially the New Testament. His method is of a positive statement and then controls are placed. He shows a much wider use of the Fathers, than Calvin, and uses

²⁵⁶ Bullinger III:345 c.f. III:202; IV:50

²⁵⁷ Bullinger III:345-6

²⁵⁸ Aug.: Conf. 10:42, 67

²⁵⁹ Bullinger I:160

²⁶⁰ Bullinger III:347; Aug: De Cive X:16

²⁶¹ Aug.: Vera. Relig. 55; Adv. Max. 1; DCD X:12; Lactantius: Inst. Lib. II:16; Epiphanius: Id. de Haer. 39

²⁶² Bullinger III:210 c.f. 228

²⁶³ Bullinger III:217

Augustine in a fuller, non-dogmatic way. This difference of approach can be seen reflected in English writers of the time, but so can Calvin's methodology.

(B) Elizabethan Apologists (1559-1590).

Despite Bullinger's systematic work, no English theologians followed suit in this period. There is a distinctive growth in confidence in the subject, and the application of sources, yet their discussions were usually in passing and frequently from within other contexts. This being said, the foundations were being laid for Perkins and Hooker in the 1590s, and the growing confidence from 1560 onwards was the base upon which they would build. As with the section on the Edwardian thinkers, this will be synoptically constructed in order to highlight lines of thought.

Generally, the angelic nature was primarily defined by role not essence, which then allowed for interpretation along the lines of John Bale. For example, while James Pilkington (1520-75), who was in exile with Bullinger, wrote that angels are the noblest creatures that God made, *spirits, or winds, ministers flaming fire*,²⁶⁴ he also wrote that *they are called angels, because they be sent on his message, and do most willingly His command*.²⁶⁵ Importantly, the word *angel betokens not the substance of the creature, but the office; and is a Greek word signifying a messenger or ambassador*,²⁶⁶ which allows him to say that the

²⁶⁴ Pilkington p.267

²⁶⁵ Pilkington p.106

²⁶⁶ Pilkington p.106

*name is also given to the preachers for the heavenly comfort that they bring to man.*²⁶⁷

James Calhhill (1530-70), a leading Calvinist Divine,²⁶⁸ when refuting a Catholic tradition which said that since Christ's death all good on earth, effected by men or angels, *hath been wrought by the sign of the Cross*,²⁶⁹ (the point being that the sign of the Cross was made by angels), responded by saying that if this is so then angels must have bodies to make the sign. However, angels, *being God's ministering spirits can not make any material Cross, such as is set up in churches: nor yet mystical, such as men use to print on their foreheads.*²⁷⁰ William Fulke (1538-89), a Calvinist with Presbyterian sympathies,²⁷¹ relating to the Apocryphal story of Habakkuk being taken to the lions den by an angel (Bel. 33-39), countering the idea that the angel carried Habakkuk by its own power, said that the angel is the angel of *the Spirit of God*, and so it is right to attribute its power to the Spirit and not to itself – following Basil that angels cannot act without the Spirit.²⁷² It is also interesting that Fulke treats the story as Scriptural, and feels obliged to respond to the attack.

On a different tack, John Jewel (1522-71), the leading Elizabethan apologist,²⁷³ when answering the idea in Catholic thought that perfection was required to enter heaven, but that different groups had differing levels of perfection (children, men and angels),

²⁶⁷ Pilkington p.106

²⁶⁸ ODCC p.265

²⁶⁹ Calhhill p.199 (1565)

²⁷⁰ Calhhill p.199 c.f. p.207

²⁷¹ ODCC p.646 c.f. P. Lake *Moderate Puritans & the Elizabethan Church* (CUP, 1982) pp.57-8

²⁷² Fulke I:575 : Basil: De Sp. Sanct. 16

²⁷³ ODCC p.875-6

wrote that scripture says that men will be placed above the angels, and so arguing over types and levels of perfection is in vain.²⁷⁴ As far as angelic knowledge is concerned, little is expressed. Jewel wrote that angels were taught by the Holy Spirit, an understandable position based on Basil,²⁷⁵ but otherwise, besides passing mentions of the limitations of their knowledge, little else is written.²⁷⁶

Building from a discussion of the angelic fall, Puritan sympathiser Edwin Sandys (1516-88), wrote of Satan *that had received the heavenly gift, and been a partaker of God's Holy Spirit, and has tasted the good word of God and of the powers of the world to come.*²⁷⁷ The basic state of an angel before the angelic fall partook of the Spirit, which doesn't sit comfortably with Basil, who would have seen the Spirit as being given as a part of confirmation, after their fall, not before.²⁷⁸ However, he accepts the view that the angelic fall was through pride,²⁷⁹ but he also says that angels fell because they did not fear God - a slightly different angle.²⁸⁰

Despite the use of angels as a model for men to follow in the Book of Homilies, it is not a common theme among the Apologists. Pilkington infers that angels will serve men, but only those who are obedient (the elect alone), and that the elect can *command the angels.*²⁸¹ However, he tempers this with the assertion that this only happens when men are in conformity with God's will, the implicit point seemingly

²⁷⁴ Jewel III:580

²⁷⁵ Jewel IV:1182: Basil: De Sp. Sanct. 16

²⁷⁶ e.g. Sandys p.172

²⁷⁷ Sandys p.362 (pub. 1585)

²⁷⁸ Basil: De Sp. Sanct. 16

²⁷⁹ Sandys p.391

²⁸⁰ Sandys p.186

²⁸¹ Pilkington p.27-8

being that when men and angels are in conformity with God's will there will be a natural harmony over working together – men would only command what God would command. The dual society, with men becoming like angels (morally, rather than by nature), and angels and men praising God, all feature, and he ties this in specifically with the creation of the Church as a Godly and obedient society. ²⁸²

The way angels and men relate together is also touched upon by Whitaker, who accepted Augustine's idea of the two societies. ²⁸³ John Woolton (1535-1593) too, in his *Christian Manual*, quotes Augustine, and underlined man's duty to obey God, since as the Creator He blesses man with *sweetness and comeliness* through angels. ²⁸⁴ Elsewhere, this almost translates into the idea of Guardian Angels. He wrote:

Indeed we may not forget at any time, that it is our parts to give ear to the voice of God, and to stop our ears against loose and vain pleasures; and to obey the Holy Angel aiding and guiding us, and to withstand the foul fiend tempting us. ²⁸⁵

While one cannot call this a clear doctrine of Guardian Angels, it is certainly a statement of the reality of a single angel involved in the guidance of a man's life - not simply men being guided direct by God, or by the Spirit. On a more poetic (and perhaps Lutheran) note, Sandys writes concerning the need for good and honest

²⁸² Pilkington p.61

²⁸³ Whitaker p.462 : Aug.: Gen. Lit. 1:21

²⁸⁴ Woolton p.96

²⁸⁵ Woolton p.130

speech, since men are on a stage before the angels as well as other men,²⁸⁶ which leads him, using Jerome, to suggest that angels witness and judge men's actions.²⁸⁷

Similarly, the angelic role in providence is not ignored, but following the line of Calvin, whenever Christ's role could be exalted it was. Pilkington saw the Angel of the Lord (Exodus 23) as Christ Himself,²⁸⁸ and later he says that just as God sent his angel to guide Israel, so would he send His Spirit who would *comfort them in all dangers and distress, and deliver them from all perils that were toward them, and therefore they should not fear*. This is another example of a re-assignment of roles from angels toward God, this time, the Spirit.²⁸⁹ Jewel, when painting a poetic picture of a land that has the Gospel story, writes *how God sends angels in the message, and how angels come down from heaven to serve the men*.²⁹⁰ During an attack on the exaltation of angels and a reliance on angels, Jewel, using examples from Acts said that God could have sent an angel to preach to the Ethiopian Official, or to Cornelius, or to speak to Paul, but He didn't. God chose men, Jewel's point being that any simple man who knows the Gospel can preach and convert others, and angels do not bring the Gospel of salvation.²⁹¹ God truly used angels, but only to ensure that a man, not the angel, finally did the job.

Regarding the Elizabethan Apologist's use of the Fathers, a broader application and growing complexity is well demonstrated by a number of them. A good example is John Jewel who showed a growing sophistication in his use of sources. This was

²⁸⁶ Sandys p.213

²⁸⁷ Sandys p.216

²⁸⁸ Pilkington p.134

²⁸⁹ Pilkington pp.136-7

²⁹⁰ Jewel IV:1180

²⁹¹ Jewel I:1086

probably due in part to the growing vigour of Catholic apology, but while some may have resorted to a straight Scripture-only Calvinist approach, Jewel, under the influence of Bullinger, did not. Haugaard cites Jewel's distinctive use of the Fathers, developed beyond Cranmer, as something that set him apart from his contemporaries, both English and continental.²⁹²

Jewel fully engaged with ancient sources and traditions. For example, in *Of Private Mass* (c.1564) he rejects a number of apocryphal stories which were used to defend Private Masses, such as angels ministering the sacrament to a monk called Marcus, angels coming from heaven to consecrate Amphilochius bishop of Iconium, or *when Arnulphus began his matins at midnight, and said Domine labia and all his monks were asleep, a number of angels supplied the lack.*²⁹³ Again, in *Of Prayers of a Strange Tongue* (c.1564) (saying that the Scriptures should be available in the vernacular), Jewel writes of Origen and his views on angels - the context of the challenge being that:

The heavenly powers and angels of God, which be within us, have great liking in our utterance of the words of Scripture. Though we understand not the words we utter with our mouth, yet those powers understand them, and thereby be invited, and that with delight to help us.²⁹⁴

Thus, said Rome, we don't need to understand what we say since the angels supply what we lack in this area. Jewel says no. Firstly, Origen taught that:

²⁹² Haugaard pp.242-6

²⁹³ Jewel I:191 c.f. II:1100

(Angels) have their offices allotted to them diversely, some over trees, some over herbs ... some have the power to teach grammar, logic, rhetoric and sciences; and that some are appointed to guide and guard us in this life. ²⁹⁵

For Jewel, in this second quote, all Origen meant by this allegorical picture was that angels were all around to aid men, and this comforts the simple of faith and belief. From here, Jewel argued that Origen said that angels aid men with the deeper mysteries of Scripture, not the plain and simple meaning, and not in set prayers, as in the service of the Mass. Angels delight in the simple in faith reading Scripture, and to read it, it must be in the vernacular. ²⁹⁶ Jewel then works his way through a range of Patristic sources to demonstrate this, citing Augustine five times, Origen twice, plus Jerome, Basil and Chrysostom, and which leads him to say:

Thus, saith Origen, the angels of God delight to see us praying. Thus they delight to see us reading. But if they delight only to see us pray, or hear in a strange tongue, we know not what, then they are angels of darkness, and not of God. ²⁹⁷

Jewel concludes his argument by talking of the conversion of Russia at the time of Cyril and Methodius by preaching and giving the people a service in their mother tongue. Rome was uncertain of this method, but an angel spoke from heaven, saying:

²⁹⁴ Jewel I:325 c.f. Origen: Hom. Josh. 20:1

²⁹⁵ Jewel I:326: Origen: Hom. Josh. 23; Hom. Num. 20

²⁹⁶ Jewel I:327

²⁹⁷ Jewel I:328

Let every spirit praise the Lord: and let every tongue make confession unto him.

So, Jewel says:

By this story it appears that the angels of God from heaven was author that these nations should have their service in a common tongue.²⁹⁸

Thus Jewel, using tradition, throws the argument back at Rome, saying that angels *want* the people to have Scripture in the vernacular.

William Whitaker (1547-1595), a strict Calvinist who generally had little time for tradition and the Fathers,²⁹⁹ took a similar line in his *Disputation On Holy Scripture*.

In the context that Catholic apologists said that one does not need to understand what one is praying in order for it to be efficacious, Origen is quoted:

*We often, indeed, do not understand what we utter, yet the Virtues understand it.*³⁰⁰

Whitaker, responds by saying that Origen was talking to people who struggled to read the Bible, and he gave them hope by saying that at least the Virtues understand it.

Whitaker rejects the Catholic application of the passage, however, he doesn't reject

²⁹⁸ Jewel I:335

²⁹⁹ ODCC p.1735; Lake pp.95-6

³⁰⁰ Whitaker p.266 (c. 1588): Origen: Hom. Josh. 20

the essential point of the passage that Virtues are present at the reading of Scripture in Church.

Turning to the Mass, Jewel raises an issue that was present in the 1549 Prayer Book, but removed in the 1552, about the presence and role of angels. Rome quoted Chrysostom who said that angels and archangels were present at the Mass, from which they built the argument that all, angels included, received as the priest made the sacrifice of the Mass.³⁰¹ Jewel, however, said this was simply saying that angels *make their prayers for mankind*.³⁰² True, angels are always present and interceding for men, looking after them and guiding them, but this cannot be extended into saying they receive the sacrament in some mediated form.³⁰³ Pushing the argument into other sacramental areas, Jewel authoritatively quotes Chrysostom to say that angels were present at Christ's baptism but were not active - only the Triune God operated there,³⁰⁴ and more generally that the seven angels in Revelation does not indicate the seven sacraments.³⁰⁵

Jewel also attacks Dionysian speculation, asking how Rome knows what angelic orders are in heaven, what they do, how they operate, their sphere of authority, and *what laws and policies they have between them*? True, Scripture says that multitudes of angels wait on Christ, but where is this developed into a hierarchy, especially one that places the Pope at the summit of the Church?³⁰⁶ Jewel then uses

³⁰¹ Jewel II:739

³⁰² Jewel II:741; John Chrys.: Hom. Heb. 15

³⁰³ Jewel II:741-2

³⁰⁴ Jewel III:498; John Chrys.: Hom. John 25

³⁰⁵ Jewel III:458

³⁰⁶ Jewel III:278 (c.1562)

Dionysius in reply, saying that *in the heavenly government the whole company of the angels hath none other one head, but only God.*³⁰⁷

Whitaker similarly attacks the Dionysian scheme by saying that one cannot accurately speculate on angelic ranking. Using Ignatius of Antioch, he highlights that Ignatius had claimed:

... himself able to understand heavenly things, the whole celestial state, and all the ranks of angels; and yet declares himself inferior to Peter and Paul, who yet neither had much skill in such matters.³⁰⁸

Whitaker does not attack Ignatius by saying that angelic ranking was non-Biblical, but sarcastically says it is strange he had more insight than the Apostles themselves, and using this idea that the Fathers cannot go beyond the teaching of the Apostles, he attacks Dionysius - both the authorship, and the speculation. It is *an argument full of difficulty and audacity*, and the apostle Paul (II Cor.12:14) says *that these and other such subjects are ineffable*: he besides says *that it is not lawful for a man to utter*. He then quotes Irenaeus and Augustine about their professed ignorance and the futility of searching into these things.³⁰⁹ He also makes the point that other prominent Fathers, like Gregory the Great and Bernard had differing views of the hierarchies, so who is right and to be appealed to?

³⁰⁷ Jewel III:279 c.f. Ps. Dion.: C.H. III:2

³⁰⁸ Whitaker p.574 c.f. Ep. Trallians 5

³⁰⁹ Whitaker pp.576-7 c.f. Irenaeus: Adv. Haer. II:55; Aug.: Ench. 58

Fulke also cited the early church to refute the assertion that for the first 600 years of Church History, invocation of the saints and angels was taught and practised:

No writer of the three hundred years after Christ hath any one jot either of practice or belief to allow it! Epiphanius among the heresies of the Caianes counteth Invocation of Angels.³¹⁰

In contrast to this engaging with sources, Thomas Cooper (d. 1594) strongly subordinated the Fathers to Scripture. For example, he wrote how Clement of Alexandria and Justin Martyr taught that angels fell from their *estate for the carnal love of earthly women*,³¹¹ and how *Clement of Alexandria taught that men's souls are transformed into angels, and first learn for a thousand years of other angels; afterward teaching other new transformed angels, at length become archangels*. His response to both is that they *cannot be soundly taken of out of the Scriptures*.³¹² However, unlike Jewel, Cooper makes no attempt to engage in the debate – he just writes the story off as non-scriptural, and thus not worth pursuing.

These quotations show that attacks on angelic mediation and the Cultus in general continued, but the level of sophistication in the attack was growing. Sandys condemned those who had *made their intercessors infinite in number* and had *gotten themselves legions of angels to whom they pray, and millions of idols which they daily adore*.³¹³ The role of angels as bringers of revelation and teaching

³¹⁰ Fulke II:41, 88, 390 (1580); Epiph.: Adv. Haer. I:iii:38 cited.

³¹¹ Cooper p.146 (c. 1562)

³¹² Cooper p.146-7: Clem. Alex.: Strom. 2 & 6 (No Justin ref. given by Cooper)

³¹³ Sandys p.27 c.f. Fulke II:546

is also shied away from, and using Hebrews 1, Sandys, with hints of what may perhaps be called “angelic cessationism”, said that

God teaches inwardly, but by outward means. He spake in old times by angels, by dreams, by visions, by revelations. But now in these latter days he has spoken by his Son.³¹⁴

In contrast, when talking of the perfection of Scripture, Jewel wrote that:

If men should have a revelation, and hear an angel speak unto us, how careful would we be to mark, and remember, and be able to declare, the words of the angel! Yet is an angel but a glorious creature, and not God.³¹⁵

Sandys, though, clearly wanted to limit the role of angels. Using the story of the angel coming to Cornelius, Sandys admitted that the angel comforted Cornelius and told him what to do,³¹⁶ but Sandys adds a form of caveat (with which, as we have seen, Jewel agreed) that the angel sent Cornelius to Peter to instruct him, as *God will have his gospel preached by men, and not by angels. He will not have us looking for revelations from heaven.*³¹⁷

Likewise, Fulke, in his defence of the Bible in English against Martin, wrote that even if 10,000 angels had come to Luther and told him to deny himself he would not

³¹⁴ Sandys p.116

³¹⁵ Jewel IV:1163; IV:1174 c.f. Whitaker p.623, 631, 690, 696

³¹⁶ Sandys p.267

³¹⁷ Sandys p.269

have done so since his confidence was grounded in God's truth.³¹⁸ Building on this, he attacks the use of images in churches, making the point that God clearly allowed some images (Cherubim) in the tabernacle, but these were given directly from God, and not from *any man's imagination*.³¹⁹ Again, quoting Augustine against the exaltation of angels, Calhfill wrote that however excellent angels may be, one must never build a temple to them, as this would mean one would be *accursed from the truth of Christ, and from the Church of God*.³²⁰ This is followed by the refutation of a commonly held Catholic belief that an angel had engraved a Cross upon tablets of stone, and God had commanded people to make the mark on their foreheads.³²¹

Like Bale, Elizabethan Apologists did not take it for granted that *a messenger* in scripture was necessarily an angel. For example, Calhfill called St. John an angel,³²² and Jewel asserted that a *bishop ought to be an angel*, presumably perfect in conduct and obedience.³²³ In response to this trend, the Catholic apologist Martin attacked the propensity of Protestant translators to see the word *angel* in scripture as simply meaning *messenger* or *preacher*. Fulke tried to answer Martin's objections and, for example, he noted the controversial interpretations used by Rome - why *secret* for *sacrament*?³²⁴ Further, Fulke looked to justify the use of "messenger", saying:

³¹⁸ Fulke I:38 (1580)

³¹⁹ Fulke I:181-2 c.f. Jewel II:656

³²⁰ Calhfill p.130: Aug.: Contra Max. 1 : c.f. Fulke II:192 c.f. 384

³²¹ Calhfill p.133

³²² Calhfill p.68

³²³ Jewel III:422 c.f. II:824; IV:806, 968

³²⁴ Fulke I:218 c.f. I:275

It is not safe to translate always the messenger of God by the name of an angel which is commonly taken to signify a spirit, not a bodily creature. Why? Angel of itself is no name of dignity, seeing as there be angels of the devil and of darkness, as well as of God and light. ³²⁵

Ultimately, there is *no rule to bind translators*, and he ridicules those who call preachers angels and then assumes they are angels by nature. ³²⁶ Similarly, he rejects the idea that the angels of the churches in the Book of Revelation are angels by nature (i.e. Guardian Angels of churches) but says they are, in fact, just human preachers. ³²⁷

Conclusion.

To conclude, English angelology of period 1559-90 while demonstrating a consistent antipathy to, and rejection of, Catholic positions, does show a growing willingness by some (not all) to truly engage in the subject and the Patristic sources concerning it. Arguments were growing in sophistication, and Bullinger's more positive approach appears to have been influential for some, yet the general Continental Reformed/Calvinist antipathy was equally as strong. These two broad approaches, while apparent but not clearly defined in this period, become crystallised in the 1590s in the works of William Perkins and Richard Hooker, to whom we now turn.

³²⁵ Fulke I:483

³²⁶ Ibid.

³²⁷ Fulke I:485

Chapter 5

HOOKE AND PERKINS

The First Attempts at a Systematic Anglican Angelology, and the first signs of the Golden Age of English Angelology.

Introduction.

Before beginning the next two sections, in order to aid clarity of argument, I will state its direction and the reason for this. The central question is how, from the situation found in the last chapter, where angelology was not regarded as an important subject, and a broadly Calvinist form of theology was dominant, ¹ did the Church, 30 years later, find itself in the so-called *Golden Age of English Angelology*? ²

By the time the 1590s had arrived, the Church of England had discovered a level of self-confidence that it previously had not enjoyed. Divines like Jewel had created an apologetic against Rome to justify the existence of the Anglican Church, and extreme Anabaptist Protestants had also been excluded successfully from influencing the fledgling church. During the 1590s, the dominant figures in the Church of England were people such as Whitgift (along with Whitaker and Cooper), whose Calvinism was amply demonstrated by the Lambeth Articles of 1595, which were produced as a reaction against doubts raised over Calvinist predestinarian teaching. ³ (The antipathy

¹ P. Lake *Anglicans and Puritans?* (London: Unwin Hyman, London 1988) p.239

² Phrase in *Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature* (Michigan: Eerdmans Pub. Co, 1992) p.40

³ N. Tyacke *Anti-Calvinists* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987) p.29

of Whitaker and Cooper toward angelology has already been noted.) ⁴ The Articles were agreed by Archbishop Whitgift, and were a set of Calvinist propositions which he said were *uniformly professed in this Church of England and agreeable to the Article of Religion established by authority.* ⁵

In this light, we will see that this was an ideal breeding ground for the Calvinist driven angelology of William Perkins. However, at the same time we also see Richard Hooker expressing his ideas, and the two are very different. We see in Perkins and Hooker, both where the Church of England currently was (Perkins), and where it was heading to (Hooker). Only 10 years after Perkins' death, James I had employed in his court an angelologist who espoused a full, mediaeval and scholastic angelology, and James' favourite preacher was Lancelot Andrewes, who too, held to a Patristic and non-Calvinist angelology. By the 1620s John Donne was preaching a scholastic-based angelology, Bishop Forbes' angelology was as near to Rome as one could get, and even the Calvinists felt compelled to engage in the subject on a level they never had before. Why was this so? I feel that there are five main reasons for this move, three of which are identifiable in the 1590s.

⁴ See pp.176ff above.

⁵ Tyacke p.30

(A) Ecclesiology and The Admonition Controversy.

The Admonition Controversy was primarily about the polity of the Church. The Presbyterians said that the one true form of Church government was set out clearly in Scripture. Conversely, Whitgift said that it was not clearly set out in Scripture, and that the form of Church government was to be decided by the local Christian magistrate or ruler.⁶ While the intricacies of this conflict do not concern us here, the outcome does. Lake notes that the ideological shift caused by this controversy was *a rejection of Whitgiftian fatalism (in favour of) a Hookerian anti-Calvinist sacramentalism.*⁷ While not immediately obvious, how ecclesiology and soteriology relate to angelology is important, and from now on most of the discussions of angelology flow from this backdrop. Aidan Nichols indicates how this was so:

The Puritan party held that predestination is not simply God's foreknowledge but is his causal determination of all things, (so) it was difficult for them to accept that sacraments are instruments of grace in and of themselves. ... The sacraments were signs of grace already received in election.⁸

While this primarily talks of sacraments, there are wider implications in terms of angelology. For Presbyterians, what was important was that the church comprised the elect,⁹ living in Godly discipline, who met to hear the preacher speak God's truth by

⁶ Lake pp.13-14

⁷ Lake p.244

⁸ A. Nichols *The Panther and the Hind* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1993) p.48

⁹ Lake p.2

the Holy Spirit.¹⁰ For a church that is eternally elect, and where the grace of election for men to grow in holiness can operate through Word and Sacrament alone, angels have nothing to add to their lives or walk with God. They have no role in bringing people toward the Gospel, since God achieves this via His Spirit making election real within the believer, and, as Calvin had said, angels were for the elect alone and not the reprobate.¹¹ The theology which drives this would doubt that God would want men to know that angels blessed or taught them as these are tasks which God would do through human ministers. Angels are superfluous to Calvinist ecclesiology and soteriology. The crucial point here for angelology is that, in *Hookerian sacramentalism*, there is the principle that one can gain grace from factors external to one's election besides just Word and Sacrament (*secondary means*).¹² In opposition to a Calvinist approach, Hooker pushes the secondary means of grace for election beyond simple Word and Sacrament. This implicitly allows a foothold for a developed angelology to grow.

(B) The Patristic Revival

As noted with Jewel and Bullinger, the interest and willingness to engage with Patristic sources is clear, and this is an example of the start of a general revival in interest in Patristics in the English Church which would find its fruition in the Laudian Church and the subsequent High Church party.¹³ However, it seems the English Divines were reluctant to derive positive doctrinal ideas from them, preferring to cite

¹⁰ L. Thornton *Richard Hooker: A Study of his Theology* (London: SPCK, 1924) p.23

¹¹ Institutes I:XIV:9

¹² c.f. Schriener pp.52-3: See p.116 above.

¹³ W. Haugaard *Elizabeth and the English Reformation* (CUP, 1968) pp.242-6

them in order to confute Catholic apologetics (e.g. Jewel) – ¹⁴ *sola-scriptura* being the guiding principle. While Elizabethan Apologists may not have handled the Fathers in a positive sense, in terms of developing doctrine, Hooker, as a student of Jewel, and then Andrewes and others began to use them in that way. However it should be noted that at this early stage many did not have wide access to Patristic works. J.I. Packer describes how there was a dearth of available literature in this period, so literate clergy would mainly be reading Calvin, Beza and Bullinger, maybe Jewel, Foxe and Whitgift, and, perhaps, the main Presbyterian thinkers, so influences were, at best limited. ¹⁵

(C) Growing Unease with Calvinism

The growing unease with Calvinism is shown in the Admonition Controversy as well as the criticisms that provoked the reaction of the Lambeth Articles, but these were merely a symptom of a wider unease and a wish to have an alternative model for the Church of England. ¹⁶ Again, Hooker was the first to give a real voice to this, but others not only pre-dated his work, but also followed his lead, if not his actual theology. As Lake says:

All the theological ingredients which were to give English Arminianism its distinct flavour were present within English protestant thought by the 1590s. The sacrament centred piety, the emphasis on ceremony and

¹⁴ S.L. Greenslade *The English Reformers and the Fathers of the Church* (OUP, 1960) pp.5-6

¹⁵ J.I. Packer *An Anglican To Remember* (Pamphlet from St Antholin's Lectureship, 1996) p.7

¹⁶ This move is well documented in Tyacke pp.1-85

the beauty of holiness, (and) the rabid anti-puritanism (provided) all the conceptual tools for a direct assault on (Calvinism). ¹⁷

By extension, these factors also provided a fertile atmosphere for a fuller angelology to develop, since sacramentalism, as we have seen, allows that foothold, and to reject Calvinism's systems is generally to move to a model more sympathetic to angelology.

(The fourth and fifth reasons, not apparent in the 1590s, but which would come into play during James's reign are the influences of Jacobus Arminius, and that of King James himself. These will be discussed in the next chapter.)

With this general background we will now look at Perkins and Hooker specifically.

(1) William Perkins (1558-1602)

Perkins was one of the most influential Puritans of the late 16th and 17th centuries – an influence which reached across Europe. ¹⁸ He was influenced by Calvin, Beza, Bucer and Bullinger, committed to Reformed orthodoxy, and he espoused a Christocentric Christianity built around the Bezarian doctrine of strict double pre-destination and supralapsarianism, which, above all things, wanted to assert and protect the absolute sovereignty of God. ¹⁹ Although he was well grounded in the Fathers, and knew how

¹⁷ Lake p.245

¹⁸ Packer pp.1-2, 19

¹⁹ Ibid pp.17-19

to use them within his arguments,²⁰ his central approach was a Biblicism that followed Calvin's literal and contextual method. This effectively meant that he rejected any mediaeval interpretative techniques and the shaping of interpretation by tradition, and refused to go beyond the plain and simple meaning of texts.²¹ More importantly, his aim was to be *practical, being attuned at every point to the business of finding and following the path of eternal life.*²² However, it must be noted, that while he looks like one who would desire a reformed and Presbyterian Church of England, he was one who saw himself as one in the mainstream of the Church of England.²³

In this light, Perkin's angelology is predictable on many levels, and is what is to be expected from one with his background. His classic text, *The Golden Chain*, was published in 1595,²⁴ and while its main purpose was to defend a Bezarian Calvinism, it also served as a manual of theology, and as such mentioned angels. To see the flow of his thought, it is worth quoting the entire section. It begins at the end of Chapter VII:

The inhabitants of the world are reasonable creatures made according to God's own image – they are either angels or men. The image of God is the goodness of the reasonable creatures, resembling God in holiness.

Angels are created in the image of God, which makes them good and resemble God in holiness. Next comes the specific section on angels:

²⁰ R.T. Kendall *Calvin & English Calvinism to 1649* (OUP, 1979) p.54

²¹ Packer p.19 c.f. Inst. I:XIV:3-4; See pp.112ff above.

²² Packer p.11

²³ Kendall p.54: Packer p.17

The angels, each of them being created in the beginning, were settled in an upright estate; in whom these things are to be noted. First, their nature: angels are spiritual incorporeal essences. Secondly, their qualities: first, they are wise; they are of great might; they are swift and of great agility – this was the reason why the cherubim in the tabernacle were painted with wings. Thirdly, they are innumerable. Fourthly, they are found in the highest heaven, where they ever attend upon God and have society with Him. Fifthly, their degree: that there are degrees of angels is most plain, but it is not for us to search who or how many there might be of each order; neither ought we curiously to inquire how they are distinguished, whether in essence, gifts or offices. Sixthly, their office: their office is to partly magnify God and partly to perform his commandments. Seventhly, the establishment of some angels in that integrity in which they were created.²⁵

This is very brief and functional, with little movement beyond the basic Biblical evidence, plus a few subtle criticisms of mediaeval Catholic tradition thrown in for good measure. (It is of note that, despite his grounding in the Fathers, Perkins, makes no attempt to reference any, nor indicate any ideas found in them.) A number of points demonstrate Perkins' thought and his approach.

First, Perkins starts the section with the idea of *each of them*, which indicates that God created angels as individuals, and not an amalgous society of beings with no

²⁴ Text used: I. Brevard *The Works of William Perkins* (Appleford, 1970)

personal uniqueness. He continues by talking of angels being created in an upright estate, which probably means that they were without sin, not fallen, and perhaps had the capability of not falling. Yet he ends it with a statement that says that some were established in that initial created state, which means the term *settled in an upright estate* is not the same as *establishment*, which seems to mean confirmation. A question here is raised, but not answered, for one who holds to a strict double predestination for men, would Perkins apply the same idea of eternal divine election for angels, created as individuals? It seems that, similar to Augustine (who also noted their individuality in this context), Perkins does not make any attempt to propose a solution to this question.²⁶ However, later Calvinists were faced with this issue, especially those who held to a supralapsarian theology, since it would suggest that God willed Satan to fall and thus deliberately created the demonic realm. Mentioning the confirmation of the angels is also of note, as it suggests that Perkins wanted to stress that God can and does confirm his creatures in a permanent and eternal way, and it could be seen as an angelic example of what was to become known as the *perseverance of the saints*. Finally, he has the standard rejection of the Pseudo Dionysian tradition couched in terms of Calvin, but phrased like Bullinger, without the directly named attack.

Going deeper, what is striking is the absence of any idea that angels and men are linked, along the lines of Hebrews 12:22, as individuals, or as members of the church, as well as appearing to go beyond Calvin through the absence of any mention of angels doing God's will on earth – their involvement in God's providence. While the 6th clause points to angelic ministry in this way (angels *perform His commandments*),

²⁵ The Golden Chain: Chpt. VIII

the lack of detail encourages the reader not to link angels to providence, just as the citation of angels being solely in heaven would not encourage an extension of *performing commandments* to be something that happened on earth. Perkins only specifically talks of angels as being in heaven (*in society with Him*), and not of them interacting with men and the church on earth, which directly parallels Calvin's lack of interest in angels and their direct part in providence and ecclesiology. One reason for this is that a Bezarian theology driven by an overriding need to assert God's sovereignty would not want anything to appear to compromise this, and a full and active angelic ministry could be seen as doing so. Hints of Bullinger are apparent, in that Perkins is not as negative in his approach as Calvin, but the piece strongly suggests Perkins is following Calvin's line that angels are essentially superfluous to Christian life, thought and theology, yet their existence needs to be confessed nonetheless.

To give this a wider context, Packer notes what was important to Perkins's thought:

(Perkins centred on) regeneration and repentance, self-suspicion and self examination, rational biblicism and righteous behaviour, discursive meditation and rhetorical prayer, faith in and love to Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, recognition of the sovereignty in providence and grace, and judgement, the comfort and joy of well-grounded assurance, the need to educate and cherish one's conscience, the

²⁶ Aug: De Civ. XI:33, XII:1, XII:9

spiritual war against the world, the flesh, and the devil, the ethic of discipline and duty, and the saints' hope of glory.²⁷

What one will notice is how Perkins' exposition on angels has no bearing on these areas whatsoever. Arguably, angelology touches on all these points, and Anglican thought prior to him had noted a role for angels in prayer,²⁸ self-examination and righteous behaviour,²⁹ providence,³⁰ assurance,³¹ judgement,³² and spiritual warfare,³³ as well as Bullinger noting that a developed understanding of angels was a part of proper (thus, rational) biblical interpretation and application.³⁴ What this very much reinforces is the superfluity of angels to Perkins' thought, and why he makes no attempt to integrate them into his wider thought. Not even the positive, yet passive, role of being an example for men to observe their obedience in Scripture and aim to copy is cited, as it is in the Book of Homilies.³⁵

Perkins was not alone in this minimalist approach. Richard Greenham (d. 1594), cited by Bishop Hall as one of the leading lights of the Church, for all his sermons and other works, he only mentions angels in *A short forme of Catechising*, which uses a standard reference from the Psalms:

²⁷ Packer p.2

²⁸ Primer 1559: *Private Prayers* (Parker Society, 1851) p.93; See above p.151

²⁹ Latimer II:86; Bull p. xiv; See above pp.144, 152

³⁰ Becon III:33; Bull p.53; Pilkington pp.136-7; See above pp.140ff, 171

³¹ Bull p.12; Bradford I:338; See above p.143, 152

³² *Sermons or Homilies* p.367 ; See above pp.151ff

³³ Becon I:185, III:16-17 ; See above pp.141-2

³⁴ Bullinger III:327-8; See above p.157

³⁵ *Homilies* p.72, 367; See above pp.121, 151-12

All good angels of God shall watch over me, and pitch their tents around me.³⁶

Elsewhere, in *An Instruction Touching Religious or Divine Worship*, Perkins does indicate how men and angels relate, but it is only in heaven and only in the area of worship:

The principal worship of God is a work in us whereby we are made conformable to him in holiness and goodness, and whereby his image is renewed or restored to us. This principal worship has two properties. The first is eternity, for it begins in this life and is perfected in the life to come, because it is that everlasting worship wherewith angels and saints shall forever worship God in heaven.³⁷

This, while linking men and angels, falls far short of the idea of a joint society. Also, the passage again makes the point that worship leads to conformity to God, which then leads to the restoration of God's image. God's image is found in the action of holiness and worship, not in anything ontological, and suggests that if one worships God, then one is elect. This brings to mind the Calvinist syllogism cited by Kendall – *Everyone who believes is a child of God; I believe; therefore I am a child of God.*³⁸ Perkins is perhaps using the worship of the angels as proof of their confirmation, which would allow men to say if they worship God, they are then truly elect as well. Worship demonstrates election.

³⁶ Ed. K.L. Parker, E.J. Carlson *Practical Divinity* (Ashgate Pub. Ltd, 1998)

³⁷ Perkins p.312

³⁸ Kendal p.9

Finally, *A Treatise Of The Vocation or Calling of Man* shows again that Perkins, in a similar vein to Sandys, minimised the ministry of angels. Perkins states that God calls men in two ways. Firstly, He does it Himself. Secondly:

God calls mediately by means, which be of two sorts – men and angels. By an angel was Philip, being a deacon, called to be an evangelist.³⁹

From here he moves on to other issues, and does not return to it. Biblically, Perkins must admit that angels are used to call men, but it is skated over, and as with Sandys, the idea of God using men to call men is exalted. Both tend toward a position which is uncomfortable with angels having any explicit or visible involvement with men, and would not push the idea that angelic ministrations are still a normal part of the Christian life.

(2) Richard Hooker (1554-1600)

Introduction and Background.

In stark contrast to Perkins' approach is Richard Hooker's. It has long been known that while Hooker desired nothing other than being thoroughly conservative, mainstream and orthodox,⁴⁰ aspects of his thought were *distinctive and novel* in the context of

³⁹ Works p.448 c.f. Sandys p.269

⁴⁰ Lake p.146

the time and the debates he was engaging in.⁴¹ As we examine his angelology, we will see that in contrast to Perkins' predictable minimalism, Hooker was fundamentally different in methodology, application and outcome - so much so that Lake's general analysis of Hooker that he *lacked obvious precursors in the 16th century*,⁴² can be easily and honestly applied to his angelology.

His angelology is mainly to be found in Books I and V of his *Laws Of Ecclesiastical Polity*, and involves discussion about the angelic creation and their place within God's wider creation, their nature and existence, how the angelic society operates, the angelic fall, angelic knowledge, and how angels and men interact. This range of discussion in itself is a clear move away from Perkin's minimalist Calvinist approach, but more crucially for us, Hooker envisaged an inter-connected universe where angels, men and the church, each interacted with, and depended upon, the other:

God has created nothing simply for itself: but each thing in all things and of every thing, each part in other hath an interest, that in the whole world (i.e. the universe) nothing is found whereunto anything created can say; *I need thee not*.⁴³

This is the central deviation from Perkins and those in the Calvinist tradition. For Hooker, angels could never be superfluous to theology or the Christian life. I will discuss the areas one by one, but first I must give some background to Hooker to show from where his angelology came.

⁴¹ Lake p.146

⁴² Lake p.228

⁴³ Sermons III:2

Hooker's early theological education was under the influence of Bullinger's friends, Jewel and Sandys, but as he grew his thought moved away from their Calvinist influences, yet he appears to have retained Bullinger's irenic attitude, and Jewel's willingness to engage with Patristic sources and influences. Hooker's main work, *The Laws Of Ecclesiastical Polity* (published around 1593/4) was written in the style of the Mediaeval Scholastics, and looked for a comprehensive overview of Christian doctrine, custom and practice and ethics. It was written both as a rejection of Mediaeval Catholicism and Continental Reformed Protestantism and Presbyterianism, and also as a defence of the Church of England as an Episcopal institution which had taken the best of both branches without succumbing to their excesses. Arguably, it was the first piece of positive Anglican theology, as opposed to the negative reactionary pieces of the previous 40-50 years which were directed against Rome.⁴⁴ Hooker was also the first to fully express the distinctive view of the Anglican Via Media. His theological method was distinct from the Calvinist Puritan focus on the absolute all sufficiency of Scripture to answer all questions of faith and life, and on the ability for all Christians to fully apprehend that truth by the Holy Spirit's guidance.⁴⁵ In contrast, Hooker built his theology on the inspiration of Scripture in the light of reason and tradition, and not on a strict adherence to personal conviction, inner illumination and guidance by the Spirit alone:

⁴⁴ Ed. C. Morris *Hooker's Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (London: J.M. Dent, 1969) p. vii

⁴⁵ Thornton p.19: *For the Puritans not only main principles but every sort of detail must stand out luminously in Scripture beyond dispute, ready for faith to grasp by immediate intuition.*

(We) must search out all helps and furtherances of direction, which Scriptures, councils, fathers, histories, the laws and practices of all churches, the mutual confidence of all men's collections and observations, may afford. ⁴⁶

The reason for this approach is that Hooker recognised the Bible contained everything necessary for salvation, but that it does not tell *everything*. It tells men everything needed to be saved and live properly, but it leaves certain other gaps and definitions to be filled by reason and observation. ⁴⁷ Also, Hooker understood that the evidences for truth and the reasons for faith were complicated and many sided, and appealed to the whole being, through observation and reason. Therefore one had to use one's whole being and faculties to apprehend that truth, not just the limited sense of reading Scripture and feeling surety. ⁴⁸ This attitude is expressed in a number of ways, but one important way is the rejection of the Calvinist Puritan methodology of Scripture read by the Spirit alone joined with a rejection of tradition – an approach Hooker caricatures:

Whatsoever we have in common with the church of Rome, if the same be of this kind, we ought to remove it. ⁴⁹

Or, if it looks Catholic, it is *ipso facto* wrong. This implies that since Catholicism had a developed angelology, it meant that they would not, and that anything built on tradition, or shaped by Patristic or mediaeval thinkers, would not be accepted.

⁴⁶ *The Works of Richard Hooker (Vols I-III)* (London: W. Clarke, 1821) Ep. Did. c.f. I:10 - c.f. J. Marshall *Hooker and the Anglican Tradition* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1962) p.50

⁴⁷ I:14:1

⁴⁸ Thornton p.17

How this guides Hooker's angelology is shown in two ways. Firstly, Hooker argues in Book I of *Ecclesiastical Polity* that God rules everywhere on the basis of divine decrees or eternal laws, and that the Bible is only a part of this whole eternal law. Reason, guided by God's grace, acts in accordance with God's laws and decrees, and men's reason is not only given by God, but is also used by God. Reason can find evidences for God, and can discover the laws instituted by God throughout the universe, by observing the creation and deducing aspects of the Creator. This Reason is not limited to Christians alone. Thus elsewhere, in a similar vein to Bullinger, Hooker says that even pagans can see the work of angels just described:

Thus far even the paynims (pagans) have approached; thus far they have seen into the doings of the angels of God.⁵⁰

This says that you do not need Scripture to know that angels exist, nor to gain a reasonable understanding of them. This moves against Calvin's understanding of angels, for Calvin did not see angels as self evident enough to allow men to move beyond the explicit bounds of Scripture, in fact, Calvin appears to have implicitly doubted Scripture's ability to clearly define and describe angels, since men could only be misled by studying them. However, for Hooker, they are self evident enough for pagans to gain a good understanding of them without reference to Scripture.

The second important point which guides Hooker has been previously mentioned, but is none the less important enough to restate, and that is that Hooker used tradition,

⁴⁹ IV:9:2 c.f. IV:10:3 c.f. Thornton p.21

mainly the Fathers, but also the mediaeval Scholastics, (probably learnt from his time as Jewel's student), and this places him in the general patristic revival in late 16th century England.⁵¹ He also used philosophy (mainly Christianised Aristotelianism, probably an influence derived from Aquinas) to add to his understanding of Scripture, but it is argued that he also had lines of Platonic thought running throughout his *Laws* too.⁵² They never dominate his thought, as Scholasticism arguably allowed, but unlike the Calvinist Puritans who simply rejected out of hand these areas as having any value,⁵³ Hooker clearly valued both tradition and reason (philosophy) as shedding greater light upon Scripture and revelation, and his balance of Scripture, Reason and Tradition is a feature of his work, and is also a guiding feature of his angelology.

(A) The Eternal Law of God and the Angelic Law

Hooker's primary conception of the universe, similar to that of Thomas Aquinas, is that it is based around a series of laws.⁵⁴ Both Hooker and Aquinas talked of God's Eternal Law; that He is both the First Cause and the Final Goal, and that everything is created with this goal in mind; the goals are achieved through following God's Eternal Law, and this Eternal Law is the root of all other laws.⁵⁵ The entire creation reflects its Creator, and it is a hierarchically ordered universe that leads man to know that there is a God.

⁵⁰ I:4:1 c.f. Bullinger III:328

⁵¹ Lake pp.226-7

⁵² Lake p.226: See above p.61

⁵³ Calvin: Inst. I:XIV:12

⁵⁴ P. Munz *The Place of Hooker in the History of Thought* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1952) pp.29-67

⁵⁵ Munz pp.175-177 c.f. Marshall p.85

Within both Aquinas' and Hooker's cosmologies, and thus their angelologies, is the inherent presupposition that every created being has a purpose that can be traced back to God, the First Cause. Everything flowing from God has a role related to Him, and a role which brings it back to Him. The key to understanding all things, and therefore angels, is to discover their purpose and goal. To know the purpose of something is to know the meaning of its existence, and one is required to move towards the goal or purpose of one's existence:

Everything that exists has an operation or particular form of activity that is not constrained or accidental, and nothing begins to function according to this operation without some planned purpose toward which it works.⁵⁶

According to this model, Reason, Will and Action are inter-related. While in created beings they are imperfectly expressed, in God they are all fully and perfectly expressed and formed. This can be expressed in terms of God having, being, and acting in, the absolute fullness of His nature.⁵⁷ Angels, in the same way, will show a direct relationship between their nature, their purpose and their actions - a similar position to that of Gregory of Nazianzus.⁵⁸ When God created angels, He gave them a purpose – to reach the fullness of their nature. However, angels as with men, have free will, and so the chance to fall away and to move away from their goal. Therefore this purpose is

⁵⁶ 1:2:1 - Paraphrased by Marshall p.78

⁵⁷ My phrase.

⁵⁸ Greg. Naz.: Th. Or. II:31

more of a *possibility* or potential fullness of nature to be realised, than an inevitable outcome of their nature:

All things (except God) are somewhat in possibility, which as yet they are not in act. ⁵⁹

One moves from *possibility* to fullness by striving to imitate God:

The next degree of goodness is, that which each thing covets, by affecting resemblance with God, in the constancy and excellency of those operations which belong unto their own kind. ⁶⁰

This is essentially an act of the will, since *nothing can move unless there be some end, the desire whereof provokes unto motion.* ⁶¹ The laws of the universe are designed to lead creation toward its God-given goal, ⁶² and the angels, as a part of Creation have a law to enable them to do this. It is a law which *they do clearly behold and without any swerving observe, (and it is a) law celestial and heavenly.* ⁶³

Thus, the Eternal Law, as it relates to the angels, can be summarised as follows. All created things have a God-given and defined purpose, this purpose being to reach the

⁵⁹ I:5:1

⁶⁰ I:5:2

⁶¹ I:7:1

⁶² I:3:1

⁶³ I:3:1

fullness of their nature. This is achieved by imitation of God, and the greater the imitation the closer one gets to their God-given goal, and thus fullness of nature.

Imitation of God is achieved by following the Eternal Law, which angels do by following the Angelic or Celestial Law, to be defined below.

Hooker sees two levels of eternal law. The first may be called the Primary Eternal Law, and it is the ultimate foundation of all other laws. It is that Law which applies to all that has been foreordained and foreseen before Creation by God, and this includes the Incarnation, atonement and issues around predestination.⁶⁴ As Hillerdal says:

In the first law the eternal God foresaw what would happen and also foreordained certain steps to be taken by himself in order to regulate anew and adjust the disorder which would result when the happenings not caused by himself occurred.⁶⁵

Since the law was to *anew and adjust disorder*, this would indicate that God knew that men and angels would fall, which would point to the idea that the Laws presuppose the human and angelic fall, and presumably would provide a solution to them. As we will later see, the angelic laws may be seen as leading angels to be involved in this *regulation and adjustment* of the *disorder* in the human realm.

⁶⁴ I:2:6 - *His law we may name eternal, being that order which God before all ages has set down with himself, for himself to do all things by.*

The second level of eternal law is fivefold, and is there to bring creation closer to God, by leading them to God's primary eternal law: ⁶⁶

(i) Nature's Law - that which orders and controls Nature.

(ii) Celestial Law - that which applies to the heavenly realms and the angels.

(iii) Law of Reason - that which men use to understand themselves, each other, and the world around them.

(iv) Divine Law - that which is not apprehendable by human deduction but only by special revelation from God.

(v) Human Law - that which humans take from Reason and Divine Law to order society.

Clearly we are interested in the Celestial (Angelic) Law, but Hooker's angelology begins in Nature's Law, as this includes both inanimate and animate or voluntary agents. ⁶⁷ Inanimate agents cannot rebel against God's laws. For example, a flower cannot sin, but voluntary agents like men or angels have that choice. Once this has been established Hooker moves to Celestial Law in Book I:4, but why does he look at angels before men? It may be that, like Aquinas, he envisaged a hierarchical universe,

⁶⁵ G. Hillerdal *Reason and Revelation in Richard Hooker* (Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1962) p.43

⁶⁶ I:3:1 : *All things therefore, which are as they ought to be, are conformed to this second law eternal.*

⁶⁷ I:3:2

and so began with angels as the intermediate beings between God to man, thus providing man a wider context to be discussed in.⁶⁸

Although this may be a part of the reason, a further implication is that men must look to angels who perfectly fulfil their Law, and then aim to do the same:

(The laws) bindeth (creatures) each to serve unto the other's good, and all to prefer the good of the whole before whatsoever their own particular.⁶⁹

There is unity between the laws, and an inter-connectedness, which begins in the angelic Law and flows into the laws for men and the Church. At the very first stage, Hooker has rejected the Calvinist idea that one must be *willingly ignorant* of the angels, since to fully understand God's Law for Man, one must have an understanding of God's Law for Angels. As Hooker later argues, man finds and gains his context from the realms both above and below him.⁷⁰

(B) Angelic Existence, Nature & Creation (Book I:4:1)

Before looking at (I:4), the start of Hooker's exposition, an important point is to be noted, that he makes no attempt to look at the creation of angels. The normal pattern for Mediaeval Scholastics was, at some point in their discussions, to look at the origins of angels, and to decide if they were formed before the corporeal world or alongside it.

⁶⁸ For example, Aquinas wrote: *The angel's nature is midway between the divine nature and the nature of bodies.*: S.T. 1a:LXI:3:2

⁶⁹ I:3:5

⁷⁰ Marshall pp.88-89

⁷¹ Even Calvin, while he rejected the whole notion as idle speculation, felt compelled to mention that there was an issue, but said it was unanswerable. ⁷² Similarly, Bullinger felt compelled to highlight the issue, even if he does eventually adopt the Augustinian position of a refusal to speculate. ⁷³ Even Perkins very briefly mentions their creation. ⁷⁴ Hooker, however, passes straight over it. His section which deals with creation as a whole (I:3:2) focuses on how the creation was created with the laws in place, yet even here the Celestial Law is not mentioned, whereas other laws are either mentioned or alluded to. Why is this so? One answer would be to look at (I:2:2/5) which demands a respect for the mystery of God and His ways, and then to suggest that Hooker held that the angelic creation was a mystery too deep and wonderful to delve into, or to be certain about. While this is possible, it is unlikely since, first, there is no reason why he couldn't have said this (as other Catholic and Protestant theologians had), and second Hooker had no problem using ancient writers and thinkers to define and clarify other issues, and so should have had no trouble with it here.

More likely is that Hooker saw that the Celestial Law and angels were created simultaneously, but he was not concerned about *when* this occurred relative to the rest of creation. Section (I:2:1-6) introduces us to the idea of the Laws, and why God works that way, and Hooker's essential position is that inherent within all the acts of God is a reason. God is not abstract or irrational in His actions, and here Hooker

⁷¹ Lombard: Sent. Bk. II:2:2-6; Aquinas S.T. 1a:LXI:A:1-4

⁷² Inst. I:XIV:3-4

⁷³ Bullinger III:329

⁷⁴ Golden Chain VIII

quotes a number of pagan writers (Anaxagoras, Plato and the Stoics) who called God *the Maker of the world, an intellectual worker.* ⁷⁵

They all confess therefore in the working of the first cause, that Counsel is used, Reason followed a way observed; that is to say, constant Order and Law is kept. ⁷⁶

Later, Hooker makes the point that:

The particular drift of every act proceeding externally from God we are not able to discern, and therefore cannot always give the proper and certain reason of His works. Howbeit undoubtedly a proper and certain reason there is of every finite work of God. ⁷⁷

The flow of the argument is that God's act and reason are in perfect co-ordination, so it is reasonable to assume that Creation and Law are one as well, and so the angels were created with their Law. If God had the *second eternal law* eternally and fully in His mind, and this second law is for *all things as they ought to be* then He must have had the Celestial Law, and thus angels in mind. These two things would not have been separate, and so they would have been created and instituted simultaneously. Seemingly confirming this, Hooker says that:

⁷⁵ I:2:2

⁷⁶ I:2:2

⁷⁷ I:2:4

How should either men or angels be able to perfectly behold (God without the Law)? ⁷⁸

God wanted angels to behold Him, so He must have created them with that desire and goal in mind. For Him not to have done so would require Hooker to posit a creation of the angels where they were created aimless with no purpose, vision or understanding of God, yet still be expected to stand firm in God.

This would explain why Hooker does not mention the traditional ways of looking at the angelic creation, as they not fit his theological methodology. This does not mean that he contradicts any previously proposed theories, but the angle Hooker takes is so different from traditional views that raising them would not aid his argument. This also raises questions around the angelic fall - did they have their Law to reject, or was the Law given after the fall in order to confirm them? This would suggest they fell from a position of having the Law, but this is something I will investigate further when talking of the angelic fall.

Hooker starts his section dealing specifically with Angels - Book I:4 – with the statement:

(At) the throne of God (we) consider a little the state of heavenly and Divine creatures.

This is a statement of fact - angels are assumed to exist, and Hooker, as with most thinkers of his day, sees no need to go beyond the simple assertion that they do, and

⁷⁸ I:2:5

builds his argument from this premise. Angels are *spirits immaterial and intellectual*,⁷⁹ and are *the glorious inhabitants of those sacred places, where nothing but light and blessed immortality, no shadow of matter for tears, discontentments, griefs, uncomfortable passions, to work upon, but all joy, tranquillity, and peace, even for ever doth dwell*. With such a perfect dwelling place, why did they fall? This will be discussed later, but afterwards Hooker mentions that Christ taught men to pray that they would live *as the angels have it in heaven*. This is probably a reference to the Lord's Prayer, and shows Hooker to hold a similar to view to the many that preceded him who looked for men to see angels as moral models for them to emulate.⁸⁰

Angels are organised in *huge, mighty and royal armies*, and live in *perfection of obedience unto that law, which the Highest, whom they adore and love, and imitate, hath imposed upon them*. Presumably it is in their *imitation of the Highest* that angels achieve the perfect obedience God which requires. Although this idea could come from Aquinas,⁸¹ it seems to hark back to a more Patristic influence, being found, for example, in Origen,⁸² and Pseudo Dionysius.⁸³ Like Hooker, Origen and Dionysius see the goal of all things as the highest good, and this highest good is to be as like to God as is possible, but Hooker ties it into the Law, where the Law leads angels to that goal, and their confirmation appears to make them able to perfectly reach that goal. This idea appears often in Hooker's thought, and, not surprisingly, is not a

⁷⁹ c.f. Aquinas: S.T. 1a:L:2 ; Hutchinson p.160

⁸⁰ E.g. Becon II:158; Latimer II:85-86; Pilkington pp.27-8; Bull pp.42f

⁸¹ c.f. Summa Contra Gentiles 1:30 ; Munz p.176

⁸² De Principiis 3:6:1 - *The good after the attainment of which the whole of rational nature is seeking ... is defined by many philosophers as follows: The highest good, they say, is to become as like to God as is possible. But this definition I regard not so much as a discovery of theirs, as a view derived from Scripture.*

⁸³ Ps. Dion: CH: III:1-2, IV :21

concept used by Calvin or those walking in his footsteps who would hold to a double predestination and election model of salvation. Imitation of God is an idea more suited to a progressive sanctification soteriological model.

This idea that angels are moved and motivated by a wish to be as much like God as possible, and that this is achieved by imitation of Him, is crucial for understanding how angels operate in Hooker's thought. He starts with the premise that:

For beholding the face of God, in admiration of so great excellency, they all adore him; and being rapt with the love of his beauty, they cleave inseparably forever unto him.⁸⁴

Angels are moved by their love for God, but, importantly, they are also moved by a love for His creation:

(The Angels') desire to resemble Him in goodness, maketh them unwearible and even insatiable in their longing to do by all means all manner of good unto all the creatures of God, but especially unto the children of men.

God as Creator loves and protects Creation, and so angels, in imitation of God, do the same. Their mission is rooted in the fact that they desire to imitate God as closely as possible, and since God works providentially, so angels desire to do the same with a direct action upon, and concern for, creation:

⁸⁴ I:4:1

In the countenance of (men's) nature looking downward, they behold themselves beneath themselves; even as upward in God, beneath whom themselves are, they see that character which is no where but in themselves and us resembled.

God's face is a mirror in which the angels can look to see how they should be acting - another imitation reference. As they look at God they see God's character in themselves and men, and from the previous quotes, this drives them to minister to men. However, what is the resemblance between angels and men? It is called *character*, which could mean either, both are images of God or that both angels and men are called to imitate God and so have similar goals with a similar end. Neither option is exclusive of the other, and probably both are a part of the resemblance Hooker is envisaging.

However, if an angel is moved by the love of God towards its final goal, how is this consistent with true freedom? The solution can probably be found by realising that angels have the law (imposed), and an *unweariable* and *insatiable* desire to fulfil this law to reach their final goal which suggests that God moves them to do perfectly what they freely desire – which is to imitate God perfectly and reach their goal. The next comment Hooker makes points to this being the solution:

God moves angels, even as that thing does stir a man's heart which is thereunto presented amiable.

God moves angels in a similar way to an object of desire stirring a man's heart. The idea is of God introducing a suggestion to the angel, and since angels are sinless and want to imitate God, they would not then reject that stirring, and would act on it as fully and as perfectly as they could. This argument also has the feeling that Hooker needs to state that angels are not autonomous in relation to God, but act in complete conformity to Him, and by Him,⁸⁵ which arguably could counter any Calvinist criticism that says a too broad an understanding of angelic freedom compromises God's absolute sovereignty. From this Hooker sees three ways in which angels are receptive to God's action of moving them, and thus lead them to fulfil the Angelic Law:

- First is *most delectable love arising from the visible apprehension of the purity, glory and beauty of the God invisible, saving only unto spirits that are pure*. This means that angels are moved by love caused by their vision of God.
- Second is *adoration grounded upon the evidence of the greatness of God, on whom they see how all things depend*. In comparison with the first, that could be called, *emotional reason of love*, this second is more an *intellectual adoration* built on an understanding of the power and omnipotence of God.⁸⁶ These first two actions reflect God's call to men to *love the Lord your God with all your heart and mind*, and shows that angels operate in a similar way to men.

⁸⁵ c.f. Basil: De Sp. Sanct. 16 – Angels can only act by the Holy Spirit.

⁸⁶ Both my phrases.

- Third is *imitation, bred by the presence of his exemplary goodness, who ceaseth not before them daily to fill heaven and earth with the rich treasures of most free and undeserved grace*. Once again we see imitation crop up, and the angels' capacity for it according to God's grace. God loves, sustains and assists His creation, and this is what angels also desire to do, as we have seen.

(C) Angelic Society (Book I:4:2)

Up to this point, Hooker has been implicitly building a link/interaction between angels and men, but it is now that he begins to make it explicit:

Of angels we are not to consider only what they are and do in regard of their own being, but that also which concerneth them as they are linked into a kind of corporation amongst themselves, and of a society or fellowship with men.

Whereas Perkins, for example, was content to describe angels in a way that radically minimised how they related to men, Hooker takes a more dynamic approach, and wants to look at their being and work, and then how this relates to mankind – since we are to *consider* how angels are *concerned* with mankind. Hooker sees that angels are linked into a society with men via three laws.

- First is the law of the angels, where angels are to praise God *individually*.

- Second is that *corporately* they are formed into *an army, one in order and degree above another*. This looks like a fixed hierarchy, but it seems to be in terms of role, *not* nature, as Pseudo-Dionysius would have had it. It is notable, however, that Hooker makes no attempt to name the different groupings indicated in Scripture – simply admitting an ordering is sufficient for his purposes.
- Finally, angels are one with men in a communion of joy, and they profess themselves fellow servants along with men, which leads to the third law which *binds them to works of ministerial employment*. The third point flows from the first two. Angels have a law which guides how they relate to God, a law which guides how they relate to other angels, and a law which guides how they relate to men. Hooker is building a holistic, interconnected scheme of laws that not only filters ministry down from God to men, but guides angels in all areas of their existence.

(D) The Angelic Fall , Confirmation and Angelic Knowledge (Book I:4:3 - I:6:1)

Hooker now moves on to the fallen angels, who rejected a *continuance in the exercise of virtue of their high and admirable virtue*. As indicated back at the start of (I:4:1), angels lived in a perfect dwelling place with God, so how could they fall from such a position? They had the presence and knowledge of God before them, and this is the fullness of everything, and it seems they also had the Celestial Law, and perhaps an understanding of the Primary Eternal Law as well,⁸⁷ so they were falling from a place of knowledge and understanding. The state of the angels pre-fall is not

⁸⁷ I:2:5

greatly discussed, but Hooker does seem to indicate their basic position in a couple of passages, the first being Book V:App I:28-29.

Firstly, Hooker says that happiness is the reward given to angels for obedience.⁸⁸ Obedience to the Law is the way that angels achieve their God intended end, the fulfilment of their nature,⁸⁹ and the receiving of their reward is through obedience to the Law. However, some angels did not want or follow this path:

Sin ensued through their own voluntary choice of evil, neither by appointment of God, nor yet without His permission.

In the joint light of (I:2:6),⁹⁰ what is being pointed to here is that God knew the fall would happen, and that the Laws were instituted before the fall, so presumably the Laws had within them provision for the Fall. However, the Fall was not an inevitable consequence of the angels' creation or nature but was a free choice, and thus Hooker rejects any form of Calvinist predestination model for the angelic realm. Angels had, theoretically, within themselves the ability not to fall, so Hooker could write:

Angels and men had before their fall the grace whereby they might have continued if they would without sin.

⁸⁸ V:App I:28 - *Concerning His intended work of creation and government simply in itself considered ... (it is to) ... give angels and men happiness in the nature of a reward.*

⁸⁹ V:App I:28 - *He assigned unto angels and men a state of the greatest happiness to be acquired by actions of most dignity, proceeding from the highest degree of excellency, that any created nature was to receive from Him.*

⁹⁰ See above p.200

Clearly some angels did not fall, which suggests the ability to live in that initial grace, yet this is difficult to ascertain since we are not told of any period between creation and fall. However, Hooker indicates that angels could not maintain the sinless state without God's intervention or confirmation:

Yet so great a grace God did not think to bestow on them, whereby they might be exempted from possibility of sinning; because the latter belongs to their perfection, who see God's fullness of glory, and not to them, who as yet serve him under hope.

Thus it seems the initial grace was the possibility of not sinning (as mentioned here), but that an extra grace of confirmation or perfection needed to be added to prevent the *possibility* of a subsequent fall. This whole line of thought parallels Basil who saw that angels, while they have difficulty in falling, and so could stand alone for a short time due to their foundation in holiness - yet they eventually required the Spirit to ensure their position.⁹¹ This is a idea rejected by Aquinas since *no angel could of his own will turn toward that bliss unless aided by grace*⁹² - the point seemingly being that angels never had the possibility of not sinning or standing alone without God.

Elsewhere, Hooker says that while humans were tempted by something external to themselves, angels were not. There was no *object having force to avert their conceit from God and draw it another way*, because *God must needs seem infinitely better than anything which they so could apprehend*. Since the angelic fall happened before they *attained that high perfection of bliss, wherein the elect*

⁹¹ Basil: De Sp. Sanct. 16 & 20

⁹² S.T. 1a:LXII:2

angels are, without the possibility of falling, this indicates that it is confirmation that leads to *high perfection of bliss*, which is itself the goal of angelic existence.⁹³

Returning to answer the question of why angels fell, Hooker uses an idea paralleled in Origen. Origen saw sin as a turning from God to oneself which meant a loss of inner integrity and the vision of God, and this came about by refusing to imitate God in some way or another. To clarify the point, sin was to not look at one's inherent purpose and goal, but at oneself - to not live out one's nature.⁹⁴ Obedience to God was to imitate Him, so Hooker describes the angelic fall in terms of a *reflex of their understanding upon themselves*, a looking to themselves, not God, the result being that *their adoration, love and imitation of God, could not choose but be also interrupted*. Hooker then expresses this process in terms of pride being the cause of the angelic fall, that the self-contemplation, and lack of imitation became pride which broke the angelic laws. Continuing this line argument, Hooker describes their fall in other terms:

The happiness even of angels depended chiefly upon their belief in a truth which God did reveal to them: the truth of that personal conjunction which should be of God with men: For Christ, although a redeemer unto to only men, might notwithstanding be revealed unto angels as their Lord. ... Man, (the angels') inferior by degree of nature, they must in Christ the Son of God advance unto so great an honour adore. Which mystery, the too great admiration of their own being so

⁹³ I:4:3

⁹⁴ Origen: De Prin. 1:4:1

likely to have made incredible, it is unto us the more credible, that infidelity through pride was their ruin.⁹⁵

The happiness of angels, in this context, means their reward from God, and an acceptance of the truth of God, which fallen angels rejected. This truth was regarding the incarnation, and the subsequent exaltation of the human nature above that of the angels, thus the reason for the fall was a rejection of the incarnation and jealousy of man. This idea was also held by a number of Patristic writers,⁹⁶ but it is a view of the fall which does not fit neatly with Hooker's idea of a reflex of understanding upon themselves, but sees it as the rejection of an external idea - that of the Incarnation – an idea which led them to over value their own nature, and disdain the exaltation of man. Hooker does not tell us how God revealed the Incarnation to the angels – whether it was part of the eternal law, the angelic law, or their vision of God – but it clearly was not from an innate understanding given by God.⁹⁷

With a nod to Origen, but mainly to Augustine, Hooker says that the demons fell, *some in the air, some on the earth, some in the water, some among minerals, dens and caves, that are under the earth; they have by all means laboured to effect a universal rebellion against the laws (of God) ... and ... utter destruction of the works of God.*⁹⁸ However, Origen sees this distribution as a feature of the good angels, not demons alone, since *for the disposition of all things there is a certain angel appointed for the earth, another for the waters, and another for*

⁹⁵ V:App 1:29

⁹⁶ e.g. Greg Nyssa: Dis. Cat. 6:5: See pp.32-4 above.

⁹⁷ Marshall pp.86-7

⁹⁸ I:4:3

the air, and a fourth for fire. ⁹⁹ It is also different from the angle Jewel took. Jewel said that Origen taught that angels *have their offices allotted to them diversely, some over trees, some over herbs ... some have the power to teach grammar, logic, rhetoric and sciences,* ¹⁰⁰ and Jewel read this as an allegorical picture that angels are all around men in order to assist them, but the essential point is that Hooker sees angels living on earth as a sign that they have been ejected from heaven. It is also worth noting that these demons can guide oracles, which shows that angels can speak into, and influence, a man's soul and mind. ¹⁰¹

In many places, Hooker has mentioned the relationship between men and angels, and this relationship (or difference) between angels and men is also demonstrated by their knowledge. The goal is for men and angels to imitate God. Imitation is acting according to one's nature, and one's nature is relative to God. Imitation can be measured by knowledge expressed in action, since *preceding in the knowledge of the truth, and by growing in the exercise of virtue, man, amongst creatures of this inferior world, aspire to the greatest conformity with God.* ¹⁰² How does this pattern relate to angels and men, and how much knowledge do they have in order to imitate God?

In the matter of knowledge, there is between angels of God, and the children of men, this difference; Angels already have full and complete knowledge in the highest degree that can be imparted to them: men, if we view them in their spring, are at first without understanding or

⁹⁹ Aug: De Civ. IX:22; Origen: Hom. Jer. 10:6

¹⁰⁰ Jewel I:326

¹⁰¹ I:4:3

¹⁰² I:5:3

knowledge at all. Nevertheless, from this utter vacuity they grow by degrees, till they come at length to be even as the angels themselves are. That which agrees to the one now, the other shall attain unto in the end; they are not so far disjoined and severed, but that they come at length to meet. ¹⁰³

Angels have full knowledge, and so can act in full accordance to their being, and be fully conformed to God. (This has parallels in both Aquinas and Bullinger – Aquinas citing angels acting in the fullness of their nature, and Bullinger saying that God provides angels with a fullness and completeness of knowledge which enables them to enact His will.) ¹⁰⁴ This fullness is as much as their nature can bear, and would seemingly allow perfect imitation of God, and thus for them to attain the reward of happiness – and by implication this would be knowledge that demons do not have. This would mean that this knowledge was given after the angelic fall. From this there seems to be a difference between Law and Knowledge, since this indicates that they had the Law at the Fall, but not the fullness of knowledge. After the fall they received the requisite knowledge to fulfil their Law perfectly. Thus the pre-Fall angels possessed the Law, but not the knowledge of how to fulfil it. However, it cannot be that angels were ignorant of the implication of the choice made before the fall, so they could claim that they were *in the dark* when exercising their freewill. The Law must have provided the angels with enough information to make their exercise of freewill choice true enough for God to then rightly condemn them.

¹⁰³ I:6:1 c.f. I:10

¹⁰⁴ Aquinas: S.T. 1a:LXII:A: 8; 1a:LXIV:A: 1-4; Bullinger III:336

This passage also shows that it is man's goal to reach such a degree of perfection of knowledge that he becomes like the angels. Man's maximum knowledge is the same as the angel's current maximum, which allows them to act fully in accordance with their nature, and it would not be a huge leap of logic to see this as part of men becoming *ισαγγελοι* – Hillerdal says exactly this, that an increase in knowledge would lead to an increase in respect to the moral life, which then leads man closer to God.¹⁰⁵ To be *ισαγγελοι* is to resemble God in holiness, and for Hooker this is achieved by a growing perfection in knowledge leading to perfection in holiness – a progressive sanctification model. Elsewhere, Hooker also cites *ισαγγελοι* as being perfected in joy, peace and delight for all eternity.¹⁰⁶

(E) Angels, Men and the Church.

Throughout these initial chapters on angels Hooker regularly points toward a developed view of the society and unity that exists between angels and men, but he doesn't advance the theory. However, in other sections of *Ecclesiastical Polity*, Hooker does reveal more about the question of prayer, the nature of church, and of how the Church comprises both angels and men.

In (1:16) we see Hooker start to build an argument where he sees the following of the various laws as central to the Church of Christ, and that all laws are rooted in God and so have a level of inter-connectedness. It is man's aim to discover how these laws lead him to God.

¹⁰⁵ Hillerdal p.46

Men are to search by what steps and degrees (his soul) riseth unto perfection.¹⁰⁷

From here, in (1:16:3) the link between the Natural Law and the actions of men is stated:

The axioms of that law therefore, whereby natural agents are guided, have their use in the moral, yea, even in the spiritual actions of men, and consequently in all laws belonging to men howsoever.

Hooker then links this to the angels:

Neither are the angels themselves so far severed from us in their kind and manner of working, but that between the law of their heavenly operations and the actions of men in this our state of mortality such correspondence there is, as makes expedient to know in some sort the one, for the other's more perfect direction.¹⁰⁸

Hooker has now linked Natural Law to men, and then to the Angelic Law, and says that moral and spiritual actions of men are taken in a more *perfect direction* by an understanding of the angelic law. There is a co-inherence between the laws, and so, similar to Bullinger, one is required to have an understanding of angels, and there is not such a great gap between men and angels to stop men doing this. With this

¹⁰⁶ I:11:4

closeness it is not surprising that angels are *themselves fellow-servants with the sons of men*. From this Hooker concludes that since angels and men have *one Lord* (so) *there must be some kind of law which is one and the same to both, whereunto their obedience being perfecter is to our weaker both a pattern and a spur.*¹⁰⁹

In this light, Hooker elsewhere parallels the uses of the laws for men and angels:

To angels and men there was allotted a threefold perfection, a perfection of the end whereunto they might come, eternal life; a perfection of duty, whereby they should come, which duty was obedience; and a perfection of state or quality for performance of duty.

The first was ordained, the second required, and the third given.¹¹⁰

The same pattern is required to the same end – obedience to the law, to bring moral perfection, to bring salvation. There is also a suggestion that the laws for angels and the laws for men are, in some sense, identical, since both are designed to lead them (creatures) closer to God. For angels, this is achieved by imitation of God, and for men a similar end is called for – as Thorton says, correctly summarising Hooker:

¹⁰⁷ I:16:1

¹⁰⁸ I:16:4

¹⁰⁹ I:16:3

¹¹⁰ V:App 1:28

Man's end is the greatest conformity with God (by) the exercise of his rational and moral faculties. Man's proper activity is twofold, knowledge of truth and exercise of virtue; and both of these involve a process of growth and education.¹¹¹

As we have seen, angels have achieved both of these (knowledge and holiness), through obedience to their law. Thus the two laws of men and angels have the same end, but angels have achieved theirs and men are on the way to theirs. In this light, angels as a *pattern and a spur* looks very much like the angels leading men to greater and greater imitation of God - they being able to do so because they know what it is to fully fulfil the law that God has given. It is the job of angels to lead men to the same fullness they have. It is also for this reason, in similar vein to Origen, that when in Church, men should be mindful of the presence of angels.¹¹² An orderly church pleases the angels, but more than this, and building on the point just made, Hooker says that the perfect church must look to follow the angelic laws and example. Explicitly, the angelic laws are important as to how the Church is actually run. Thus:

The laws of angels we cannot judge altogether impertinent unto the affairs of the Church of God.¹¹³

Here Hooker changes tack completely and leaves the relationship between man and angels, and it is only much later in *Ecclesiastical Polity* that Hooker takes this up

¹¹¹ Thornton p.37

¹¹² I:16:4 - *In things publicly done by the Church are we not somewhat to respect what Angels of Heaven do? Yea, so far hath the Apostle Saint Paul proceeded, as to signify, that even about the outward orders of the Church which serve but for comeliness, some regard is to be had of angels, who best like us when we are most like unto them in all parts of decent demeanour*

again, adding a few more pieces to his theory. In (V:22) Hooker stresses the centrality of preaching, and yet raises the question, what if one is illiterate, poorly educated, or has a bad preacher teaching them? His answer in the end is that all people should pray for right teaching, and in this light he begins to speak of angels:

Between the throne of God in heaven, and his church upon earth militant, if it be so that angels have their continual intercourse, where should we find the same more verified than in to ghostly exercise, the one doctrine and the other prayer.

Hooker details this in terms of a two-fold (prayer and teaching) and two-way (descent and ascent) operation reminiscent of Jacob's Ladder:

For what is the assembling of the church to learn but the receiving of angels descended from above. What to pray, but the sending of angels upwards.

It is angels that God uses to accomplish His will in the Church, and as they move between heaven and earth, they enact an *intercourse and commerce between God and us*. The angels' *teaching brings us to know that God is the supreme truth, (just as) prayer testifies that we acknowledge him as our sovereign good.* ¹¹⁴

Again, the divergence from a Puritan/Calvinist model is striking. Angels are involved in prayer and taking prayers to God, something that even the Prayer Book had shied

¹¹³ I:16:4

away from, and angels bring knowledge and teaching to men in the church and then testify to it before God, and not necessarily the congregational teacher inspired by the Spirit. Further, Calvin would have probably have seen angels involved in teaching as dangerous, and inevitably they would mislead the congregation. For Hooker, angels provide the link between the Church and God. Regarding the angelic role in the Church, prayer is a crucial part of the Christian life, and is one more similarity and common link between men and angels. There seems to be a link made here between knowledge and prayer, and the imparting of knowledge as a function of angels is expressed in terms of a hierarchy – as a part of the cosmological structure of the universe:

(Upon) God as the most high all inferior causes in world are dependant; and the higher any cause is, the more it covets to impart virtue unto things beneath it.¹¹⁵

Here angels mediate *virtue* down towards men, but Hooker cites this, not as a giving or mediating of grace, but more of a desire within angels give men teaching and knowledge to enable a closer walk with, and imitation of, God. In this light, Hooker speaks of prayer as an activity common to both the saints in heaven, angels, and the church militant:

The knowledge is small which we have on earth concerning things that are done in heaven. Notwithstanding, this much we know of even saints in heaven, that they pray. And therefore prayer being a work

¹¹⁴ V:23

common to the church as well as triumphant as militant, a work common unto men with angels, what should we think, but that much of our lives is celestial and Divine as we spend in the exercise of prayer? For which cause we see that the most comfortable visitations which God has sent men from above, have taken time especially the times of prayer as their most natural opportunity. ¹¹⁶

Prayer is a work common to the entire Church, and angels stir men towards prayer – a model similar to that of Origen. ¹¹⁷ Angels intercede and come in response to prayer. This dual nature of the Church is expressed again later, fully, and, interestingly, using a Patristic quote from John Chrysostom. Despite all the Patristic influences and allusions in Hooker's writings, this is the only time during his discussions about angels he actually quotes a Patristic reference. Why this may be can only be guessed at, but two reasons are probable. First, the Reformers tended to prefer those Church Fathers who were exegetes and preachers, who expounded Scripture directly, and not the speculative theology of some Church Fathers - Chrysostom fits this model well, yet he is one who spent time investigating angels. Second, and linked to this, two of the great angelologists of the Early Church, upon whom one would draw for information about the relationship between angels and the church, were Origen and Dionysius, neither of whom could be quoted authoritatively to Reformers. Back to the passage:

For the honour and furtherance whereof, if it be as the gravest of the ancient fathers seriously were persuaded, and do oftentimes plainly teach, affirming, that the house of prayer is a court, beautified with the

¹¹⁵ V:23

presence of celestial powers; *that there we stand, we pray, we sound forth hymns of praise to God, having his angels intermingled as our associates*; and that with reference hereunto, the apostle does require so great a care to be had of decency for the sake of angels; how can we come to the house of prayer, and not be moved by the very glory of the place itself, so to frame our affections praying, as does best beseem them, whose suits the Almighty does there sit to hear, and his angels attend to farther? ¹¹⁸

Again the closeness of angels and men is clear – *intermingled as our associates* - but Hooker doesn't develop further this relationship. However, the importance of the recognition by men of angels being at church cannot be understated, since Hooker says there was a time when this truth was *ingrafted in the minds of men*, and the churches were filled with people wanting to come to pray, so the state did not have to legally enforce attendance. ¹¹⁹ That the presence of angels at Church draws people to church to pray and worship could not be further from Calvinism – an attraction of angels to lead people to prayer could be nothing other than a distraction and a danger, whereas for Hooker this is a thing necessary to understanding.

¹¹⁶ V:23

¹¹⁷ Origen: On Prayer 11:1-4

¹¹⁸ V:25:2 (Chrysostom's quote in italics) c.f. Chrysostom: Hom. Heb. 15 c.f. Hom. Act. 24; c.f. I Cor. 11:10, Ps. 96:6

¹¹⁹ V:25:2

(F) Miscellany.

Two final issues are worth mentioning. First is Hooker's stance on the practice of naming churches after angels. His argument is simple, and follows a similar line to the Henrician Bishop's Book.¹²⁰ Firstly, all churches are consecrated to God - it is the Lord's house - and this is the central point to remember. Names simply help people to distinguish between them, and the name can help to inspire men to think of a memorable event or person. It just absurd to say, as the Puritans probably had, that:

...those places, which were denominated of angels and saints, should serve for the worship of so glorious creatures ; or else those glorified creatures for defence or protection, and patronage of such places. A thing which the ancients utterly disclaim.¹²¹

Second, regarding whether churches have an angel, in Book VII he raises the issue a number of times, and strangely, while his whole angelology would seem to lend itself quite nicely to such a Patristic vision, Hooker follows the general line of his Elizabethan predecessors and refuses to go that way with his exposition. Four times Hooker talks of angels and bishops, and three times he takes Bale's line on the interpretation of Revelation. Talking of the early evolution of the episcopacy:

One governor or president amongst the rest had his known authority established a long time before that settled difference of name and title

¹²⁰ Ed. C. Lloyd *Formularies of Faith* (OUP, 1856) p.141: See p.100 above.

took place, whereby such alone were named bishops. And therefore in the Book of St John's Revelation we find that they are entitled angels.¹²²

The fourth mention, while not calling them angels demands that they conform their behaviour to the angels, clearly echoes his master, John Jewel:

Shine they must as angels of God in the midst of perverse men.¹²³

Conclusion.

Quite clearly Hooker's angelology is very different from both Calvin and Perkins, and the broad Catholic tradition. Aidan Nichols while talking generally, unwittingly pinpoints Hooker's concept of angels, men and church perfectly:

(Hooker had the) idea that the cosmos is constituted by a web or network of giving and receiving. As he puts it in one of his sermons:

*God has created nothing simply for itself: but each thing in all things, and of every thing each part of the other, hath such interest that in the whole world nothing is found whereunto anything created could say: I need thee not.*¹²⁴

¹²¹ V:13:1

¹²² VII:5:2 c.f. VII:11:3, 11:6

¹²³ VII:24:15 c.f. Jewel III:422; II:824; IV:806, 968

¹²⁴ Nichols pp.46-7

Hooker's cosmology and ecclesiology is a whole series of interconnected and interdependent laws which lead creation to God, and so the angelic Law and role are linked to those of men. The Laws need to be followed, and it is the angels who provide the model of obedience which men must follow to fulfil the Laws which God has laid down for them. There is an inherent connection between the two that requires a knowledge of the other. The link is cosmological and ontological due to the laws being a part of the very fabric of the universe. This is not to say that, as in Origen's angelology for example, they were heavily involved in the scheme of salvation, but it certainly places them at the hub of the concept of church, and as a part of a progressive sanctification scheme, which would also include the sacraments. One cannot understand how the church works without understanding the inter-relatedness of angels, men and the church. In contrast, Calvinism, whilst not rejecting angels, makes them effectively redundant throughout its theology.

If we place Hooker on a simple scale between the Catholic Dionysian tradition and Calvin, we see, what may be called an ideal example of the *Via Media*. For Dionysius, angels are integral to cosmology, salvation and the church; for Calvin they were peripheral to cosmology, salvation and the church; for Hooker they are integral to cosmology, involved in, but not central to salvation, and important to the church and the growth of men in holiness and knowledge of God. Hooker's view of angels is interactive, as their interaction with the church shows, but what is noticeable is that it is corporately focussed, not individually focussed - probably because the Laws are corporately envisaged. This means that Guardian Angels are not an explicit part of his

thought, yet they are not rejected by him, and it seems that the activity usually associated with Guardian angels would not be rejected by Hooker.

Clearly, Hooker's angelology is more integral to his cosmology, ecclesiology and soteriology than to Calvin's, and it shows Hooker as a clear pre-cursor to the Golden Age. All the themes that arise later are present, if not as developed as they would be, and Hooker's spirit and approach would be yet one more part of the fertile foundation that would yield such interesting thought a generation later.

Chapter 6

The Foundations of the Golden Age Consolidated. (1600-1620)

Introduction.

During the initial part of James' reign the Church of England was still broadly Augustinian with various European Reformed influences shaping this (especially Calvinism), and the three areas (noted at the start of the last section) ¹ which seemed to be pushing the Church in a different direction were all still alive and present. The continuing dominance of the pro-Calvinist party in the Church of England from the 1590s onwards, only began to be truly challenged from about 1613, as James, from the very start of his reign, appointed many Calvinists to the important positions in the Church. ² Some scholars have claimed that Calvinism was the *de facto* religion under both Elizabeth and James, ³ but as we have seen *Calvinism*, however much a dominant and increasing influence it was, was one aspect of a broad spectrum of Continental Reformed beliefs, and this was reflected in the angelology of the period. ⁴ Nevertheless, by the end of James' reign the Anti-Calvinists (as Tyacke calls them), were becoming much more powerful, even though they were often repressed. ⁵ Unease with Calvinism was still growing, and it was at that time that a Benjamin Carier converted to Rome because of the Church of England's Calvinism, which he saw as making both priests and sacraments redundant:

¹ See above pp.181-86

² Tyacke p.29

³ Tyacke p.7

⁴ See above pp. 117ff

⁵ Tyacke pp.4ff

(Calvinism) wronged the Church of England in the doctrine of predestination, sacraments, grace, freewill, synne, etc.⁶

I am sure that if he had been asked about angelology, he would have seen that as a casualty too, and added it to this list. No one has made the clear link between soteriology, ecclesiology, and angelology, but theologically the link is implicit. A higher view of Church and sacraments, as shown by Hooker, allows election confirming grace to be given in ways beyond simple Word and Sacrament. As Tyacke writes:

Every consistent doctrine of predestined grace inevitably implied a radical devaluation of all magical, sacramental and institutional distributions of grace.⁷

The reverse must also hold to be true as well, and where as Calvinism devalued other means than Word and Sacrament, High Church thought widened the methods used for the distribution of grace. The theology where a range of secondary means of grace was becoming stronger in the Church of England, in opposition to Calvinism where this was shied away from.

Under people like Andrewes, whose stature grew throughout James' reign, the Patristic revival grew and was taken up by others. In addition to this, Hooker had proposed a new way, and while his theology far from took over the Church, it was gaining an influence. Hooker's ideals and the idea of the Via Media was increasingly

⁶ Tyacke pp.5-6

becoming established in Anglican minds, but while the Via Media was once between Rome and the Anabaptists, as the 17th century progressed, the Anglican episcopate became all the more convinced that the true Via Media was between Rome and the Reformation itself.⁸

In themselves, these were not enough to produce the Golden Age, so what factors in James' reign, additional to those cited, could have led to it? Alongside the previous points, one other comes into the picture – Jacobus Arminius. As we shall see, while he himself found no place for angelology in his wider thought, his soteriology would seemingly lend itself to it, and it would not seem to be a great theological step to build into the primary Arminian system a developed understanding of angelic ministry.

(1) The Angelology of Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609)

Jacobus Arminius was a Dutch Reformed theologian, who from the 1590s onward put forward an alternative soteriological model to the double predestination scheme propounded by Calvin and his successors and followers. While some would place Arminius and Calvin at opposite ends of the Protestant spectrum, in fact, on many issues, Arminius was very much in tune with Calvin. Carl Bangs writes that:

Arminius worked within both the ecclesiastical and intellectual structure of the Reformed Church. ... He had no rootage in Lutheranism, none in Anabaptism, none in spiritualism.⁹

⁷ Tyacke p.10

⁸ Nichols pp.57-58

⁹ C. Bangs *Arminius* (Zondervan Pub, 1985) p.333

How this impacts for us is that along with a general antipathy toward any form of mediated faith, his view of the church was very much in line with that of Presbyterians, which would not allow for a developed angelology.¹⁰ Again, his sacramental theology follows Calvin, in that they ratify the promises of God, as opposed to giving grace.¹¹ The Church witnessed to the world, and Arminius cited a very strong doctrine of the Spirit in order to make this witness powerful and real.¹²

Arminius deals with angels primarily in Section 25 of his *Private Disputations* (pub. 1610). It is a short piece, about four pages, which sits between sections on *Creation*, and *The Image of God in Man*.¹³ It shows a similarity to Bullinger being a non-negative approach, but its brevity, neutrality and lack of depth implies that he too, with Calvinists like Perkins, did not see much of a role for angels in his thought and theology. Also, there are suggestions that he had a grounding in scholastic material on the subject, even if he finally espoused little of it.

He begins by saying that angels are spiritual substances created by God in order to know, love and worship Him, live with Him and serve Him *performing certain duties concerning the rest of the creatures according to the commandment of God*, (duties not here defined) and so their existence cannot be denied in the manner of the Sadducees.¹⁴ In opposition to previous thought, Arminius says that since angels are

¹⁰ Bangs p333 - *The church was neither an objective institution of grace, nor a voluntary association.*

¹¹ Bangs pp.334-5

¹² Bangs p.260

¹³ Disputation XXV:1-17 – Trans. J. Nichols & W. Nichols *The Works of James Arminius Vols I-III* (Kansas: Becon Hill Press, 1986) c.f. Vol II:58-62

¹⁴ XXV:1-2

spirit beings, they are the *opposite* of men, whereas previous thinkers (such as the Cappadocian Fathers) would have placed angels on a continuum between men and God so that angels are not the opposite of men, but simply a higher and different form from creation to man.¹⁵

Angels do not have matter or form, but have three main characteristics - that they are of *being and essence*, of *act and power*, and of *subject and inhering accident*.¹⁶

As creatures they can be described using *place*, *time* and *number*. In terms of place, they fill a space intellectually, not physically, and cannot be in more than one place at a time, nor move instantaneously. Regarding time, angels have a beginning, experience the flow of time and history, and are not outside time which would enable them to see its entirety. Their *number* is great yet undefined by Scripture, and, differing from thinkers like Gregory of Nazianzus who said angels can increase in number, Arminius says they do not increase or decrease in number, since they are not *begotten* and *do not die*.¹⁷ Being Sons of God, angels are created in the image of God, and this image has two aspects to it – their *nature*, and a *supernatural endowment*. The *natural* part is that they have a spiritual essence, and the ability to understand, have a will, and can act powerfully. Supernaturally, they have light of knowledge in understanding, and, following this, a holiness of will, thus holiness flows from understanding. Their immortality too is a supernatural endowment (irrelevant of whether they are angels or demons), and this is something additional that God has given (which possibly means Arminius sees it as part of His confirmation of both angels and demons to their respective realms; it cannot be seen as part of His

¹⁵ e.g. Greg. Naz.: Th. Or. II:3; Aquinas: S.T. 1a:LXI:3

¹⁶ XXV:3

¹⁷ XXV:4 c.f. Greg. Naz.: Hom. 16:11

image given to angels.)¹⁸ This ontologically-based idea of God's image differs from Perkins, who saw the image of God in angels as something simply moral reflected in their service and holiness, and not anything ontological.¹⁹

The work of angels can be divided into two broad areas – to praise and worship God, and to be willing and quick messengers and executors (*apparitors*) of the divine will.²⁰ (It is worth noting that Perkins only cited angels as executors of the divine will, and not messengers.)²¹ In opposition to the broad scholastic view, Arminius accepts that there is some form of ordering in both the angelic and demonic realms,²² but uses a similar phrase to Calvin, that we are to be *willingly ignorant* of the details.²³ (However, Calvin used this in terms of angelology as a whole, not just the details around hierarchical ordering.) It is probable that God *appoints distinct orders to each separate ministry* (but he will not condemn anyone who holds another view), which is a different (but not necessarily contradictory) angle on previous ideas. For example, the Dionysian scheme said only the lower orders minister, Aquinas that only the bottom 5, and Lombard who said all ranks.²⁴

At this point Arminius goes off at a strange tangent, and starts to discuss the nature of the physical bodies that angels use to manifest themselves. He says that angels did not

¹⁸ XXV:5

¹⁹ Perkins: Golden Chain VIII; Rel. & Div. Worship (Works p.312): See p.192 above.

²⁰ XXV:6 – Apparitors: *An official or messenger sent to carry out the orders of, or serves the process of, a magistrate, judge, or spiritual court.*

²¹ Golden Chain VIII

²² Lombard: Sent. II:IX:5; Aquinas S.T. 1a:CIX: A:1-4

²³ Inst. I:XIV:3

²⁴ XXV:7 c.f. Ps. Dion.: CH IX:3-4; Lombard: Sent. II:X:1-6; Aquinas: S.T. 1a:CXII:1-4

form the bodies themselves out of nothing, but they are made of pre-existing matter. The bodies are neither *essential* nor *personal* to the angel, but are *local* to them, and are for an instrumental purpose to be used for the specific act enjoined upon them by God – i.e. they are just a tool to be assumed for a singular task, and have no long-term relation or union with the angel.²⁵ The bodies have never been living, and, in a move away from Augustine, who said angels could experience the fullness of the sensual nature through their manifested bodies, Arminius says angels cannot sense or experience the world through them as men do, but, axiomatically, can only experience as an angel manifested in a human body could.²⁶

Arminius now returns to a more usual area, and puts forward an idea similar to Hooker, that God gave a law to the angels, *by which they might order their life according to God, and not according to themselves.*²⁷ At this point we see a difference from other thinkers – especially those working to a predestination model for angels. Arminius posits the idea that angels had an idea of the consequences of observing the law or not – that obedience would bring blessing, and disobedience would bring eternal misery. In this, God acted towards the angels according to *strict judgement*, and not in a way to display *all His goodness in bringing them to salvation*; but, interestingly, and differing from other thinkers, Arminius does not commit himself to whether it was a single act of obedience or disobedience which then led to the judgement of the angels. The sin of the angels was their own fault, not a predestined election, since God had not only provided them with a grace to stand, but was also willing to assist them in other (unspecified) ways, in order to obey His law

²⁵ XXV:8

²⁶ XXV:9 c.f. Aug.: De Civ. XV:23

²⁷ c.f. Hooker: Ecc. Pol I:3: See pp.198ff above.

and *remain in their integrity*.²⁸ On the exact nature of this sin, Arminius is reluctant to be drawn, but says it was probably pride.²⁹

(Arminius notes elsewhere a difference between God's treatment of angels and men, and the different *modes* that God uses to save them, and a difference in the meaning of predestination for both. He is replying to the Calvinist Junius (c.1598), who had said that angels were elected and confirmed with no reference to their sins or good works, his point being that those angels who were confirmed had not sinned, therefore their confirmation could not be linked to how sinful they were or weren't. It was just the choice of God who He did or didn't confirm. Similarly, said Junius, men are elected with no reference to their sin and works, but purely by the choice of God.³⁰ Arminius replies that both are created in His image, but God wished to restore it to man, but not angels, so God's grace to angels was to *preserve*, and for men to *restore*.³¹ For both angels and men, God allowed them to see the effects of freewill, but when angels abused it, God did not restore them, but when men abused it, He did offer restoration. For angels grace and mercy were in *contra-distinction*, but in men the two are united, and both of these methods are for His eternal purposes. Essentially, Arminius is saying that how God saves the angels is not the same as how he saves men, and one cannot parallel the two, but both were saved/damned due to sin, not divine election.)

The good angels are *good* for a number of reasons. First, due to an inherent infused habit; second, to their good acts; third, to their confirmation in *habitual goodness*,

²⁸ XXV:10-12

²⁹ XXV:16

³⁰ Discussion with Junius: Reply to 10th Proposition (Vol. III:115)

which is an increase of grace in addition to their natural grace. Their *holy purpose* is given in this confirmation, and is driven, partly by this grace, and partly by observing the punishment of the fallen angels – a reason which nobody else has cited.³² In one form or another, all thinkers have cited God's grace acting on angels in one way or another, as the way they are confirmed. For Arminius, grace is accompanied by what may be called a fear of hell, in order to ensure the position of the good angels.

As to the actual ministry of angels toward men, Arminius writes this:

When it is the will of God to employ the assistance of good angels, he may be said to employ not only those powers and faculties which he has conferred on them, but likewise those which are augmented by Himself.³³

This half sentence is the totality of his exposition on the practical ministry of angels, and it is even sparser than either Calvin or Perkins. Besides stating that it is God who directs whatever angels do, and that angels achieve this through both their own natural created abilities and additional abilities given by God, it says nothing of *what* they actually do.

Finally, in the Corollaries, Arminius cites three ideas he felt needed clarification. First, Arminius asks whether good angels oppose each other, and in doing so, fail to love as God would wish them to? (Presumably he has Daniel 10:13 in mind.) He gives no

³¹ Discussion with Junius: Answer to Reply to 10th Proposition – (Vol. III:133)

³² XXV:13

³³ XXV:17

answer to this, and allows discussion around it.³⁴ The second is one that would later be directly rejected by some Anglicans. Arminius asks:

Do angels need a mediator? And is Christ the mediator of angels? We reply in the negative.³⁵

Third, he asks whether there are different species of angel, and says probably not.³⁶

As said at the beginning, following directly in the Reformed line of Calvin and Perkins, and in direct opposition to the thought of Hooker, Arminius makes no attempt to integrate angels into the Church, nor, with any conviction, to link their ministry with people. His soteriology, which would seemingly provide an ideal base for a full angelology appears to be subordinated to his adherence to the Reformed tradition of a minimalist angelology. Arminius allows no place for anything that may look like a mediated faith – mediated faith in this context meaning the Catholic Cultus where men would ask angels for grace and blessings, and it be gained via the principle of *ex-opere operato*. The heavily Augustinian and Christocentric nature of Reformed beliefs and theology limits the channels of grace to the Church to Word and Sacrament, and places the emphasis on the giving of grace to men into the hands of God. The later High Church Arminians would use the basic principle found in Hooker, that secondary means of grace went beyond Word and Sacrament, and build a developed angelic ministry in this light. However, Arminius did not take these steps, and shied away from a developed angelology. This deep antipathy to a mediated faith in terms of the Catholic Cultus is shown, for example, in his Disputation on the *Invocation of Saints*

³⁴ XXV:Corollary 1

where he sees it as compromising the all sufficient *mediation* and *administration* of Christ, and makes it very clear that it bestows no benefits whatsoever.³⁷ He admits that angels bring blessings to men, but do so under the command of God, not at men's invocation, and serve Christ alone and are at His command. The blessings given are Christ's, not the angel's, and they can only give what they themselves have been given.³⁸

(2) The Influence of King James I

Arminius can therefore be called a part of the foundation, along with the previous three ideas,³⁹ but none of these four, while providing a fertile seedbed, can fully explain the sudden rise in interest. The catalyst for it seems to be James I himself. To start with, Lake sees that James had the theological influence over the church to make this a possibility. Although Lake is specifically writing about episcopacy, he says that there was a gradual realignment of ideology, partly during the 1590s, *but especially under the influence of James I.*⁴⁰ In a very similar vein, James Doelman has persuasively argued that :

James had influence in that aspect of English culture, religion, *which most attracted his interest*. In this area James was a major trendsetter,

³⁵ XXV:Corollary 2

³⁶ XXV:Corollary 3

³⁷ Public Disputations XXIV espec. 5 & 6

³⁸ Public Disputations XXIV: 9

³⁹ See pp.181-186 above.

⁴⁰ P. Lake *Anglicans and Puritans?* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988) p.245

or perhaps it is better to say that he was that North Star from which the religious culture of that period took its bearings.⁴¹

Doelman makes it clear that James had the power to influence others around him, and he used this to shape ecclesiology. It also seems to have happened with regard to angelology. It appears James had an interest in it, and this, combined with the already fertile theological atmosphere, allowed the flourishing to begin in the second half of his reign.

However, despite what I've just mentioned, on the surface, James I doesn't look like one who would have much sympathy for a developed angelology, being more in tune with Calvinism than anything else. Despite other well-documented flaws of character, James was a reasonably learned man, with a *quick and penetrating mind*,⁴² and was deeply and genuinely interested in theology, but, according to Alan Smith, he was *not sure of his personal (theological) preferences*.⁴³ Tyacke says that *his personal views were more subject to raison d'etat (and) although sympathetic to Calvinist doctrine, he was less inclined to be dogmatic*.⁴⁴ He was brought up a Calvinist, and had no time for the endless arguments that surrounded the questions of freewill or for Presbyterian ecclesiology, but was willing to hear Puritan criticisms of the Church, and much to the dismay of people such as Whitgift, convened the

⁴¹ J. Doelman *King James and the Religious Culture of England* (Boydell & Brewer Ltd, 2000) p.1 (c.f. Chpt. 1) – my italics.

⁴² E.N. Williams *Dictionary of English & European History (1485-1789)* (London: Penguin Books, 1984) p.236

⁴³ A.G.R. Smith *Emergence of a Nation State* (London: Longman, 1986) p.260 c.f. Tyacke p.88

⁴⁴ Tyacke p.88

Hampton Court conference in 1604.⁴⁵ While he rejected the majority of their claims, it demonstrated he was willing to hear, if not accept, other theological opinions. However, from here on in, with a few exceptions, he appointed to the bishoprics men whose theology and ideas closely resembled those of the early Elizabethan bishops – i.e. broadly Calvinist and pro-episcopacy. For example, he appointed George Abbot Archbishop of Canterbury in 1611, an old school Calvinist, plus Calvinists to both York and London,⁴⁶ yet Lake does sense a slow drift away from this kind of appointment as James' reign progressed.⁴⁷ In addition to this he wholeheartedly supported the condemnations of Arminianism by the Synod of Dort in 1619, and blocked the appointment of some Arminians to various Sees. However, James did not reject all who had beliefs similar to Arminianism, as the careers and influence of both Laud and Andrewes would testify.⁴⁸ He was generally regarded by contemporaries as a monarch who was *theologically sound and prepared to allow a wide practical degree of toleration to moderate Puritans.*⁴⁹

This would indicate that he would have little time for any non-Calvinist thought, but strangely James did have a moderate attitude toward Catholicism – despite his sponsorship and support of anti-Catholic polemic by people like Andrewes – and acknowledged Rome to be *our Mother Church, although defiled with some infirmities and corruptions.*⁵⁰ James' fascination with theology is demonstrated in his writing books on monarchy and the Divine Right of Kings such as *The Trew Law*

⁴⁵ Smith pp.260-1

⁴⁶ Smith p.262

⁴⁷ Lake p.240

⁴⁸ Smith p.262

⁴⁹ Smith p.262

⁵⁰ Speech to Parliament (1604) cited in Smith p.263

of *Free Monarchies* (1598) and *Basilikon Doron* (1599),⁵¹ and, interestingly, one on demonology in which he clearly accepts the existence, power and influence of demons on people. In three sections he describes their magical abilities, their involvement in sorcery and witchcraft, and the various kinds of spirits that possess people.⁵² Building on this general theological inquisitiveness, crucially for us, it was around 1613 that he appointed Jesuit-trained James Salkeld as his official court angelologist, but unfortunately little information survives about how and why this happened.⁵³ Nonetheless, it is no surprise to learn that people like Archbishop Abbot found James' court *too crypto-popish for comfort*, and an angelologist would seem nothing other than that to a Calvinist.⁵⁴

From Salkeld's appointment we can deduce five basic things.

- (i) It is inconceivable that James, with his theological awareness, would have appointed Salkeld without first having an interest in angelology.
- (ii) James would not have appointed him without being fully aware of Salkeld's own personal thoughts on the subject.
- (iii) James would be aware how his appointment would have been seen by those inside and outside the court, so did it knowingly.
- (iv) It can be deduced that James would have broadly accepted the line Salkeld propounded if he felt it right to appoint him.

⁵¹ Williams p.236

⁵² *Deamonologie: In The Forme of a Dialogue* (London: Arnold Hatfield, 1603)

⁵³ *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature* p.40

⁵⁴ Lake p.248 – It is also of no surprise that Abbot never mentions angels in any of his works or sermons.

- (v) James must have reckoned angelology to be a subject of enough importance and value to have made the appointment in the first place.

In this light, we will now examine what Salkeld believed.

(3) John Salkeld's *An Treatise of Angels* (1613) ⁵⁵

Biographical information is scant, but it seems that Salkeld, who came from a Northern English Catholic family, trained in both Spain and Portugal, and then returned to England as a missionary. He was captured in 1612, and after talking and debating with the King himself, converted to the Church of England. ⁵⁶ From the book one can deduce that Salkeld was trained by Jesuits, and this training is very clear throughout, since it is a book that is thoroughly grounded in the Catholic scholastic tradition – as is betrayed by its title:

An Treatise of Angels; Of nature, essence, place, power, science, will, apparitions, grace, sin and all other properties of angels; collected out of the Holy Scriptures, ancient Fathers and Schoole Divines.

This, in itself, is a full and accurate description of its contents. It was dedicated to James I, and the introduction talks of how James, like angels, moves, animates and co-operates in all good. Salkeld finishes his dedication saying:

⁵⁵ John Salkeld *An Treatise of Angels* (London: Nathaniel Butler, 1613)

⁵⁶ Doelman p.118

(Angels) teach me by ministerial motion and illustration to search these things (of God), which of myself it was impossible for me to attain unto, about Romish abuses.⁵⁷

Thus, the ministry and guidance of angels played a part in his rejection of Rome, and, implicitly, none of his angelology would he count as *Romish abuses*. From here, Salkeld begins the book proper.

The Introduction talks of what method he used to examine the subject, and he writes that the nature and properties of angels can be examined via natural philosophy and philosophical principles. Going on, following *scholastical divinitie*, one can take principles from Scripture or faith, and then make theological deductions founded upon faith – and so long as these do not make *faith infirm*, and are not *unpleasant* or *unprofitable*, then they *be not condemned*.⁵⁸

The contents page, as with the title, indicates the direction of the book. There are 51 chapters divided up as follows:

- Chapter 1- Names.
- Chapters 2-3 – Angelic Creation.
- Chapters 4 – Number.
- Chapters 5-6 – Angelic Substance and Nature.
- Chapters 7-11 – Apparitions/Appearances/Manifestations.

⁵⁷ Epistle Didactory pp.3-4

⁵⁸ Introduction p1-3 – This attitude has interesting parallels to that expressed in Article 34 of the 39 Articles.

- Chapters 12-16 – Angelic place and movement.
- Chapters 17-19 - Angelic power/ability/miracles.
- Chapters 20-33 – Angelic Speech/Will/Knowledge.
- Chapters 34-42 – Confirmation and the Angelic life.
- Chapters 43-46 - Angelic Ministry.
- Chapters 47-48 – Angelic Orders.
- Chapters 49-51 – Angelic Fall.

Before starting a survey of the book, two things need to be noted. First is that, in the style of mediaeval scholasticism, Salkeld structures the book as a series of arguments. He cites a range of opinions, weighs their strengths and weakness, and then selects the strongest option. For the sake of space, I will only be mentioning the main points, and not running through the various arguments, options and debates, since Salkeld's broad approach is what is important here. Second, is the massive range of sources he uses, the liberality with which he uses them, and the almost synoptic approach he takes to them. There are far too many to fully reference, but suffice it to say, he authoritatively cites both Greek and Latin Fathers, plus Scholastic writers.⁵⁹ Throughout, too, the parallels between Salkeld and Aquinas and Lombard, are clear and obvious, so only clear differences will be highlight beyond the basic description.

Before listing the various names found in Scripture, Salkeld defines what an angel is, and uses John of Damascus:

⁵⁹ For example, Salkeld cites Scripture and the Apocrypha, Tertullain, Ambrose, Augustine, Gregory Nazianzus, John of Damascus, Aquinas, Lombard, Epiphanius, Irenaeus, Chrysostom, the Canons of the Lateran Councils, Pseudo-Dionysius, Anselm, Theodoret, John Cassian, Origen, Aristotle, Plato, Basil, John Scotus, Gregory the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, and William of Occam. (This is not an exhaustive list.)

(Angels are) most pure and perfect, intellectual, immaterial and immortal creatures, created and appointed to be God's attendants, and messengers between God and man.⁶⁰

Salkeld notes that Scripture doesn't talk of their creation, but feels they were created as a part of *light* in the highest (empyrean) heaven, that innumerable angels were created, and although they are creatures, they are not subject to death and corruption like men.⁶¹ Angels have bodies (because demons must have corporeal bodies so they can be tormented by fire), but they *are of most pure and fine material, far exceeding the matter of all inferior subjects.*⁶² Angels truly appear to men (they are not just subjective visions), but evil angels can cause apparitions, and demons can manifest themselves too. Angels do so by assuming a physical body, and would use the body as it would naturally act (the body will not assume angelic powers because it is a vehicle for an angel), but angels cannot experience as humans can through the body, in terms of sense or emotion. (Also, God used an angelic body as vehicle for Christ in the Old Testament, e.g. Genesis 16). Angels do not create these bodies, but God does, since only He can create anything.⁶³ Angels can be said to occupy a place in time and space as a human would, but in a different, mysterious sense, and it is probable that two angels can occupy the same space. They are not omnipresent/ubiquitous, yet can appear to work in all places in creation due to their immense speed of movement. Angels move not by translation, but travel from place to

⁶⁰ Chpt. 1 – c.f. De Fide Orth. 5

⁶¹ Chpt. 2-5

⁶² Chpt. 6

⁶³ Chpt. 7-11

place passing through intermediate points. However, Salkeld avoids dogmatically answering many of these questions since he says there is a lack of evidence to do so.⁶⁴

Angels can move and produce motion in other beings, including creatures, stars and planets, but are under God's direction when they do so. Angels cannot work miracles, only God can do this, and He does so through angels, but one must be careful of imitation miracles by demons – the example Salkeld cites is when an angel appeared to a Portuguese nun just before the Armada in 1588, to say that it would be successful, which was clearly a demonic apparition! Angels cannot revive the dead, and can only move humans if God allows them to (since all superior causes can control inferior beings). Similarly, angels can illuminate the mind and will of humans, if God allows; they do so by *outward sensible signs, inward phantasms, and intellectual forms*.⁶⁵

Angels are able to understand things by the substance of the object, but even though they have enormous insight and wisdom, they still need to learn and understand, and do so by God's illumination. All angelic knowledge proceeds from God, and even though angels have an immense natural knowledge, they also have a supernatural and infused knowledge from God. Their understanding, while not perfect as God's is, grows in perfection as they become more God-like and look towards Him, and this growth in perfection seems to be linked to various types of angels within a hierarchical structure.⁶⁶ Angels can comprehend to the fullness of their intellect, and view their own nature immediately and fully, and since they are created in the image of God and know themselves, they therefore know much of God. Also, having a sinless intellect

⁶⁴ Chpt. 12-16

⁶⁵ Chpt. 17-19

aids their knowledge of God, as does their vision of God at their creation, but they cannot know God clearly and fully in His essence. ⁶⁷ When asking about whether angels can tell the future, Salkeld cites three kind of predictions – first is the obvious, such as predicting the sun will rise the next day; second is good, accurate conjecture; and third is the predicting the unknown. Angels naturally do the first two, and through God's illumination, can also do the third. Angels cannot stop thinking, as thinking is an act of living. Noting angelic speech, Salkeld follows Aquinas, but says that it really is something beyond human understanding. Similarly, angels cannot know the thoughts of other angels or men, but they do have great insight. ⁶⁸ Again, angels do not naturally know the mysteries of faith, nor do they have a full understanding of Incarnation, but they gain these through the illumination of God. The angelic will is moved by love (both natural and supernatural, which they had at their creation), and this is supremely shown by their love and service towards God. Angels love God more than themselves, but do not love other angels more than themselves. ⁶⁹

Salkeld sees that angels obtain beatitude by supernatural grace given by God (which is denied to demons), and from here he discusses the angelic fall. He sees a gap between their creation and fall, where the sin happened, allowing all angels a chance to exercise their choice (correctly or not), but says that the time elapsed could have been very short. Angels were not created into blessedness (but in the way to it – *viatores*), ⁷⁰ but knew something of it, so when demons acted in disobedience, their subsequent judgement was deserved (the exact nature of this sin is discussed later). The ability of

⁶⁶ Chpt. 20-23

⁶⁷ Chpt. 24-25

⁶⁸ Chpt. 26-30

⁶⁹ Chpt. 31-33

angels to stand confirmed is completely the gift of God. ⁷¹ Angels live in degrees of glory, so that some angels have more than others, but this not due to their own ability, but probably to their position in the hierarchy. This also explains how men join angels in heaven, and Salkeld, using Augustine's imagery, thinks that more men will be saved to be taken into the angelic realm than angels fell. ⁷²

Angels cannot cease to love God, and they love God not due to compulsion but are driven to do so by the vision of God they have, which means they can do nothing else but love and serve Him. Blessed (confirmed) angels cannot sin or commit any offence against God, since their beatitude is sufficient to stop them doing so. This beatitude cannot increase as time goes on, but angelic knowledge and joy can grow. When discussing whether an angel can sin, Salkeld says that an angel cannot of its own nature not sin, even though God could create an angel in this manner. However, such perfection would necessarily imply God's spiritual grace in its creation, which suggests that the essential answer to this is angels cannot not sin due to their confirmed nature. ⁷³

The area of angelic ministry and how it relates to men is, again, squarely in the Patristic and Scholastic tradition, but how he starts the discussion is interesting. He writes:

⁷⁰ c.f. Chpt 38

⁷¹ Chpt. 34-35

⁷² Chpt. 36

⁷³ Chpt. 37-42

Howsoever, some do misconstrue, as well as in this as in many other matters of (the) moment, the meaning of the Church of England, and of all other Protestants; it (i.e. angelic ministry) is a thing most certainly holden by them.

The point is simple. Catholics claimed that Protestant (Calvinist) theologians made angels redundant within their theological schemes. Salkeld sees this as *falsely surmised*, and even cites Calvin as saying that he does accept the existence of angelic protection. (While it is true, as we have seen, that Calvin, due to his Biblicism, would never deny angelic ministry was real, Salkeld does fail to mention that in Calvin's theology angels have little place, or value, or use.) At this point he gives a long list of Scriptures which demonstrate the reality of angelic ministry to men. Angelic protection is due to God's love, and even though He protects men Himself, He also employs angels to do it too.⁷⁴ Regarding Guardian Angels,⁷⁵ Salkeld notes that Catholics clearly say they do exist, but says that Protestants usually see it as *not a matter of certainty*, yet then claims that many Protestants do believe in them due to evidence from Scripture and the tradition of the Greek and Latin Churches. After going through the Biblical evidence for Guardian Angels, Salkeld provides 17 pages of evidence from Greek writers,⁷⁶ and then a whole chapter of Latin evidence,⁷⁷ which lead him to the conclusion that Guardian Angels do exist.

⁷⁴ Chpt. 43

⁷⁵ Chpt. 44-45

⁷⁶ Citing Plato, Gregory of Nazianzus, Chrysostom, Cyril of Alexandria, Procopius and John of Damascus.

⁷⁷ Citing Tertullian, Hilary, Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome, Gregory the Great and Bede.

Following a similar method, Salkeld accepts the ordering, subordination, and degrees in the angelic realm, and he does so by presupposing the Dionysian model, and then defending it, first with Scripture, and then with various Fathers – mainly Athanasius, Gregory the Great, and then Aquinas. He accepts that other systems were proposed by various people, but notes the authoritative people who held to the Dionysian model. (It is worth noting that Salkeld recognises that Pseudo Dionysius, in itself, was a late non-Patristic document.) After 23 pages of argument for the system, he admits that he cannot force acceptance of this scheme on people, and quotes both John of Damascus and Augustine in this vein, but still sees it as the most probable model. Continuing, there are not different species of angels, but just one species with differing offices, attributes and gifts, and, following Lombard, he accepts that all orders are sent to minister to men – *no angel is exempt from ministry*.⁷⁸

Finally, Salkeld deals with demons, and discusses what the first sin was. He dismisses the idea that it was sexually motivated, and cites that it was pride. The type of pride is also discussed, and after rejecting the idea that Satan wanted to be God, and the idea that Satan was jealous of God, Salkeld goes for the idea found in Hooker, and to be later used by John Donne, that it was a pride rooted in self-contemplation. He thinks that demons reflected on themselves and found themselves so wonderful that they did not want to serve God and come under His governance.⁷⁹ Here the book ends.

The main thing to conclude is that this is a comprehensively Scholastic and Patristic treatment of the subject, one that previous Anglican thinkers, only a generation earlier, would have thoroughly condemned on numerous levels. People like Whitaker and

⁷⁸ Chpt. 47-48

Cooper, for example, subordinated all to Scripture and refused to move beyond its limits.⁸⁰ Jewel roundly condemned the Dionysian model, not for its dubious source, but simply because there is not the information to even start to create that scheme, and all development is speculation built on other speculation.⁸¹ Similarly, Salkeld is right that no Protestants committed themselves to the doctrine of Guardian Angels, and regularly Elizabethan thinkers were deliberately non-committal about the subject, instead arguing for a vague and general angelic protection.⁸² The only areas that are absent from his study are the role of angels in praying for men and the mediating role, maybe because Salkeld (like Arminius?) held as a central Protestant tenet a non-mediated faith.

Clearly, then, for both Salkeld and James, Rome's *infirmities* and *corruptions* didn't involve a developed and scholastic or Patristic influenced angelology, and this attitude, seemingly approved by James, can be further confirmed by the angelology we find in the works of Lancelot Andrewes.

⁷⁹ Chpt. 49-51

⁸⁰ Whitaker p.266; Cooper pp.146-7

⁸¹ Jewel III:278

(4) Lancelot Andrewes (1555-1625)

Lancelot Andrewes' career covered most of the crucial and defining years for Anglicanism - the end of Elizabeth's reign and the whole of the reign of James I. He had a flair for the classical languages, from which his love for the Patristic church grew. He was appointed one of Elizabeth's chaplains around 1586, and received a high position under James, to whom he preached regularly for 18 years.⁸³ Andrewes' countered the continuing threat from a resurgent Rome, making two replies to Cardinal Perron defending the Anglican Via Media between Rome and Continental Protestantism, and he was involved in defending the newly emerging Via Media against continental Calvinism. While one cannot call him Arminian, he was an anti-Calvinist, holding that:

Calvinism tried to erect into a system that which was essentially a mystery, and thus diverted religion into speculative, and ultimately futile, channels.⁸⁴

To be as systematic as Calvinism was necessarily meant dogmatising about things that were not clear enough to be systematised and dogmatised. In this light, it is no surprise that when Arminianism reached England around 1613, he was sympathetic to it.⁸⁵

Andrewes' theological framework worked within the boundaries of:

⁸² e.g. Becon III:33, 83; Latimer II:158; Bull p.53, 62

⁸³ R.L. Ottley *Lancelot Andrewes* (London: Methuen & Co, 1984) p.48

⁸⁴ P.A. Welsby *Lancelot Andrewes (1555-1626)* (London: SPCK, 1958) pp.38-39, 44

One canon reduced to writing by God Himself, two testaments, three Creeds, four general councils, and the series of Fathers in that period - the centuries that is, before Constantine, and two after, determine the boundary of our faith.⁸⁶

For Andrewes, as one who was fully part of the English Patristic revival:

The standard or norm of faith for the Church was exhibited in its purest form in the New Testament and in the first five centuries of Church History. If Andrewes is compared with Hooker it is evident that while Hooker maintained the claims for reason against the narrow and arbitrary interpretation of the letter of Scripture, which was the Puritan method, Andrewes went even further and maintained that the Church of England, because of its link with the Primitive Church, was part of the Catholic Universal Church.⁸⁷

Both Hooker and Andrewes saw the Church of England as a continuation, in a reformed form, of the church that had always existed, and Andrewes' strong regard for Patristic Church meant that his thought and theology was naturally inclined to a positive view of angels.

⁸⁵ A.W. Harrison *Arminianism* (London: Duckworth, 1937) p.122

⁸⁶ *Concio Latine Habita In Discessu Palatini* reproduced in *Lancelot Andrewes: Opuscula Quaedam Posthuma* (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1852) p.91 c.f Otley p.163; Sykes p.237

⁸⁷ Welsby p.156

While Andrewes clearly accepts the basic idea that angels are ministering spirits of light who serve men,⁸⁸ the dominant theme of Andrewes' work around angels is the simple question, *What is it to be like the angels (ισαγγελοι)?* He finds a number of angles on this – it can be in terms of a Godly society, of a moral likeness, of a likeness in nature. Andrewes also links it to the Eucharist in a fascinating manner. Other issues arise, of course, but this is the recurring theme, and what we see is a development beyond both Hooker, and the more Calvinist thinkers who preceded him. What is clear though, is that the meaning of *ισαγγελος* is examined from within a non-Calvinist soteriological model, one where progressive sanctification is central to his understanding. It is also notable that the most developed parts of his thought appear after 1618, moving on from the embryonic ideas occasionally found in his early works. Appearing at a time when he was well trusted by James, and after James had appointed Salkeld, Andrewes uses an increasingly developed idea of a likeness to angels alongside a growing range of Patristic and mediaeval influences. To highlight his developing thought I will be discussing Andrewes' works chronologically, the earliest being in the 1590s, the last a few months before his death in 1625.

In one of his earliest surviving sermons, *Temptations of Christ* (1590s), Andrewes talks of angels being involved in God's providential works. He mentions where Satan says that angels would protect Christ from harm, and he agrees saying that this applied to men also. Angels *comfort and confirm us and defend us in all dangers and succour us in all necessities*, spreading their wings over us, and pitching their tents around us.⁸⁹ However, this is an odd reference, since it joins ideas from Psalm

⁸⁸ III:370 (All Andrewes' works from the Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology – from now on cited as LACT – for other writers as well. Full details in bibliography)

⁸⁹ V:523

34 and 91, yet in this and other Psalms the role of spreading protective wings is one assigned to God, and not to angels.⁹⁰ It suggests that God's providence, symbolised by the wings, is something that He uses angels to enact on His behalf – a more practical than revelatory or mediatory role, aspects that Andrewes later developed, as we shall see. Also, to say angels comfort, confirm, defend, and succour is a movement beyond the simple *defend* and *succour* of the Prayer Book.⁹¹ Continuing, this protective role of angels is called *God's providence (which) reacheth even to the hairs of our head for they are numbered* - and Andrewes goes further:

This charge of theirs is not only to admonish us when danger comes, but they are actually there to help us, as it were putting their hands between the ground and us. They shall take the rubs and offences out of the way.⁹²

The ministry described here is in terms that are very *hands-on*, as it were, with no sense of detachment from men. Why do angels do this ministry? It seems it is not because they simply choose to, or want to, but it is almost an inherent part of their calling:

This they do not of courtesy, as being creatures *given by nature* to love mankind; but by special mandate and charge they are bound to it, and have a *Praeceptum* for it.⁹³

⁹⁰ E.g. Ps. 17:8; Ps. 91:4; Lk. 13:34

⁹¹ c.f. Brightman pp.620ff; See pp.127ff above.

⁹² V:523

⁹³ V:523 (my italics)

Angels do not naturally love man (and so do service for this reason alone) - there also seems to be a mandate and a charge to do so also. Their service springs from external instruction, which means that angels are not autonomous in their actions, but are under the command and direction of God. However, Andrewes says because men have this blessing, it should not be abused, nor lead to men misunderstanding the angel's rightful position, since men must not *venture whither and upon what they will; for the angels attend them at an inch. He bids them put in the manner of adventure, and then but whistle for an Angel, and they will come at first.*⁹⁴ Ultimately, Andrewes makes it clear that angels and saints do nothing that Christ cannot do,⁹⁵ and generally does not move to develop his thoughts around providence, retaining a caution in line with the times.

In a similar vein, in his Sermon *Of The Power of Absolution* (1600), Andrewes takes a position that would not have been out of step with a general Protestant caution toward angelic ministry. While talking of how God communicates with men, he mentions when St. Peter was called to go to Cornelius in order to tell him more of God. In line with people like Perkins and Sandys, Andrewes says that even though an angel was involved in the process, one must recognise it was Peter who ultimately told Cornelius of Christ.⁹⁶ As he points out:

An angel must give the order to Cornelius to send to Joppa for one Simon, to speak words to him by which he and his household should

⁹⁴ V:523

⁹⁵ IV:9

⁹⁶ E.g. Sandys p.269; Perkins: Works p.312

be saved, *but the angel must not be the doer of it*. That not to the angels, but to men, is committed this office of reconciliation.⁹⁷

Angels do not give the Gospel, they just guide men towards men who can give it, and from here, Andrewes states that angels are not the mediators of forgiveness either, as this is something given by God to men directly. Clearly he admits that angels can be involved in the wider process of leading men towards God, however, even 10 years later (c.1611), he was still careful to make clear that angels are not redeemers,⁹⁸ and angels are not to be prayed to.⁹⁹

In a Sermon on *Hebrews 2:16* (1605) we start to see the common themes of Andrewes' angelology, as well as an indication of an engagement with Patristic sources. He starts with statement that Christ was not from the seed of angels, and that men are ranked above angels even though their angelic natures' are higher than men's.¹⁰⁰ On this last point, Andrewes says that angels take no offence at this ordering, and despite it, never refuse to come to assist men. Notwithstanding this ranking and priority, it was the angels who announced the Incarnation, so seeing and understanding it before men did.¹⁰¹ Clearly angels are superior to men in nature and power, yet despite the difference:

⁹⁷ V:90 (my italics)

⁹⁸ II:259 (1610)

⁹⁹ *Two Answers to Perron and other Miscellaneous Work* p23 (c. 1611). Full details in bibliography.

¹⁰⁰ c.f. I:114

¹⁰¹ I:1-3

When (men) are at our very highest perfection - it is even thus expressed - that we come near, or are therein like to, or as Angels. ¹⁰²

How does Andrewes see this likeness to angels? Here he talks of it in quite a simple way. Angels are perfect in beauty, perfect in wisdom, and perfect in eloquence - and this is man's goal. The contrast between the heavenly and spiritual nature of angels, and the corrupt flesh of men, the heavenly abode of angels and the fallen world of men, is obvious, but Andrewes returns to the point that Christ chose to be the seed of men, not angels. Angels are in *every way, in everything else (except being the seed of Christ), above and before us; in this, beneath and behind us*. However, *we, unworthy, wretched men, are above and before the Angels, the Cherubim, the Seraphim, and all the Principalities, and Thrones, in this dignity.* ¹⁰³ (In the light of his anti-Catholic apologetics, one could see this as also a move to undermine the Dionysian system, since, like Jewel, he implies that in heaven men will be placed above the angels.) ¹⁰⁴

Immediately from here, Andrewes talks of the angelic fall, saying that when angels fell, God made no attempt to reconcile them, but when men fell, God gave all - His Son - to save and reconcile men. Fallen Angels were confirmed in their rejection and refused a return to God, ¹⁰⁵ but men were not, which drives Andrewes to ask, but not answer, the psalmist's question - *What is man that Thou should be mindful of him?* ¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² I:4

¹⁰³ I:5

¹⁰⁴ c.f. Jewel III:580

¹⁰⁵ I:6-7 c.f. V:88

¹⁰⁶ I:14

He posits no answer, seemingly lost in the wonder of it, and almost enjoying the tension of the conundrum.

In *Of The Resurrection (Mk. 16:1-7)* (1608), Andrewes parallels angels and men using the notion of likeness to angels, based around the appearance of the angels at the tomb, and again a development of thought is discernable. While talking of the resurrection body *it is expressedly promised that we shall then be ισαγγελοι, like and equal to the Angels themselves.*¹⁰⁷ The angel at the tomb tells us much of the resurrection of men. First, the angel had the form of being like *a young man*, and so men will be young, healthy and without sickness; the angel was sitting, and thus at rest, so in the resurrection we will not labour; the angel was at the right hand side, thus man in the resurrection will have a place of honour; and finally the angel was clothed all in white, so men will reflect that purity.¹⁰⁸ However, the difference in nature causes men to fear when they meet angels - even when angels come to do good,¹⁰⁹ and with this in mind, Andrewes says:

Afraid they are not for any evil they were about, but for that our very nature is now so decayed (the light cannot sustain a nature of iniquity).
... As the Angels' brightness, *for whose society we were created*, yet as we now are, bear it we cannot, but need to be comforted at the sight of a comfortable Angel.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ II:231

¹⁰⁸ II:231

¹⁰⁹ II:232

¹¹⁰ II:232 (my italics)

This would suggest that the angel came as a young man, because this would be a form that would not frighten Mary – a non-threatening manifestation. Angels and men are not meant to be frightened of each other, but sin causes men to fear. Yet men, however sinful, fallen and *decayed*, are created to have society with angels (as Hooker would have agreed). With the idea of likeness to angels in mind here, Andrewes says that the problem is connected with men being *as we now are* (sinful) and so presumably, how men will be when in the angelic society (non-sinful) is radically different and will remove all fear.

The move just in these early years is noticeable. To begin with, in 1600 Andrewes portrays interaction between men and angels in a cautionary light; here in 1608 we see a model where the angel actively and visibly comforts Mary. More importantly, his idea of likeness to angels has grown from a similarity in *beauty, wisdom and eloquence*, to *purity, honour* and a youthful *health* – aspects which, while both moral in tone, seem more to do with ontology than simple action and manner.

This shift in thought is continued in *The Lord's Prayer* (c.1611). Under the section *On Earth as it is in Heaven*, Andrewes says that there are a plurality of heavens - three, to be precise, being the earth; the sun, moon and stars; and the heaven where God is - and in all of them God's will is done. The angels in heaven *fulfil His commandment and hearken to his voice*, and so men should pray to be *ισαγγελοι - like the angels*, but not only in doing God's will, (but) as they like to be like them in their nature. Andrewes makes a distinction between action and nature, calling men to be like the angels in both, and that which was hinted at in 1608 has become more concrete in his mind. Andrewes notes that angels not only remain in heaven, but, along with Hooker, he says they ascend and descend according to God's will – Hooker seeing them as

descending with blessing for the church, and ascending with prayers. However, Andrewes says, they prefer to ascend to be with God, but than descend to do God's will without question.¹¹¹

In the exposition, on *For Thine is The Kingdom*, Andrewes says that whereas as men need to petition to God, angels do not since they:

... feel no want of any good thing, and therefore they have no need to make petition to God as we on earth, and therefore all the confession that they make is of God's goodness and power.¹¹²

Why wouldn't angels petition God as men do? Two ideas come to mind. First, is that due to their confirmation, angels now have a fullness of being that means that have no need to ask for anything from God. The second could be that since they are beings of spirit, living in a heaven that is not fallen. whereas men are limited physical beings in a fallen world, the perfection of heaven means that nothing goes wrong which would require any petition. Both reasons (which are not mutually exclusive, but which provide a fullness of being, and of life) would mean that angels have no need to do anything but praise God. Generally, though, we again see an indication of where man currently is, and where he will be.

Seven years later, in a *Sermon (Luke 2:12-14)* (1618) Andrewes examined the organisation of angels, and discusses the angelic choir at the birth of Christ, while taking the opportunity to also investigate a couple of other issues. Who came to sing to Christ? It was the angels, but angels, surely, were regularly portrayed as soldiers and

¹¹¹ V:407-9 c.f. Hooker: Ecc. Pol. V:22

an army, in conflict with men. The cherubim in Eden *are but one symbol of the enmity between heaven and earth - ever since in arms to this day* - but here they are a choir singing of love and peace towards men. Andrewes explains this by saying that *upon (the Incarnation) they were to disarm, and though they are in the habit of war, yet (they) sing of peace*. Clearly, Andrewes sees a change of the angelic role at the Incarnation, but what is the change? ¹¹³ At this stage, he provides no answer, and continues, leaving the question hanging in the air.

Andrewes next asks what the *multitude of angels* signifies. The sheer number was not only an indication of heaven witnessing to Christ; it also meant a better choir could worship Him! But surely such a multitude would be difficult to organise, since *when we hear of a multitude we fear confusion and (we think of a) confused rout*. But angels are an army and *there is order in an army, there is order in a choir, there is order among angels; coordinate amongst themselves, subordinate to their Head and Leader. So a multitude without confusion*. ¹¹⁴ And this organised angelic multitude witnesses to the absolute pre-eminence of Christ, and leads man to recognise the same and praise Him. ¹¹⁵ The organisation of the angels indicates the need for man to be organised under Christ to worship Him properly (another hint at what it means to be *ισαγγελοι*), and from here Andrewes moves to a discussion of the Eucharist.

The manna from heaven is called the Bread of Angels which fed the Israelites, and Body and Blood of Christ feed men now - and when men partake in the Eucharist, they move closer to the perfection of *being like the angels*, and in the end men will be

¹¹² V:460

¹¹³ I:210

¹¹⁴ I:211

counted worthy to (worship) on high with the angels in the bliss of heaven.¹¹⁶

Andrewes' held to a high doctrine of the Eucharist and Real Presence, and this seems to play a part in men becoming ἱσαγγελοι - taking the Eucharist gives men the attributes cited earlier. In scholarly circles this has never been discussed, but Nicholas Lossky sees in Andrewes' Eucharistic theology ideas that, when joined with the studies here, make it possible to link the grace given by the Real Presence in the Eucharist with the idea of men becoming ἱσαγγελοι. For example, Lossky sees the Eucharist as the promise of future participation in the Banquet of the Kingdom, yet with a mysterious present reality,¹¹⁷ and as the reality of the gift of new life given to men.¹¹⁸ It is in the Eucharist that one really and truly unites to and participates in the Body of Christ,¹¹⁹ and in the light of Hebrews 12:22 it is not a great theological step to say that there is a link with the Eucharist and becoming ἱσαγγελοι. This is an idea that parallels Patristic thought,¹²⁰ and is also a definite move away from the thought of Hugh Latimer, who made attempts to remove angels from their sacramental context, and to put them back into a solely preaching and teaching context.¹²¹

More interestingly, Lossky sees in Andrewes' thought a form of the Patristic doctrine of *theosis*. Andrewes had a strong incarnational theology, where men desired to be themselves *incarnating the incarnation*, and the way of doing this was through the Eucharist.¹²² Man is to partake of the divine nature, and participate in the divine life, and this is achieved by Christ literally *recreating creation* – recreating man – through

¹¹⁵ I:212-213

¹¹⁶ I:214

¹¹⁷ N. Lossky *Lancelot Andrewes The Preacher* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991) p.34

¹¹⁸ Lossky p.341

¹¹⁹ Lossky p.96 c.f. pp.323-4

¹²⁰ See pp.46-7 above.

¹²¹ Latimer II:85-6: See pp.143ff above.

¹²² Lossky pp.34-6

the progressive transforming work of the Holy Spirit.¹²³ Similarly, A.M. Allchin notes that the link of the resurrection and incarnation was common in Andrewes, as was Andrewes then linking this to the Eucharist.¹²⁴ While neither Allchin or Lossky then make the link between theosis and becoming *ισαγγελοι*, it was a standard thought that angels were made in the image of God,¹²⁵ and so a likeness toward the angels would necessarily be an increasing likeness to God. Andrewes' idea of theosis and his stress on being *ισαγγελοι* makes good sense within his general soteriological model. The development of thought is clear.

The following Christmas (1619), Andrewes again preached on Luke 2:14, and he picks up where the last sermon left off. Beginning with the angelic choir praising God, he says that when men speak with the tongues of angels they are praising God as the angels do.¹²⁶ Elsewhere, he talks of angels praising God in heaven, as do the saints, and in this way men are to be like the angels in heaven – yet another *ισαγγελοι* reference.¹²⁷ To continue, this praise gives glory to God, and next to praise nothing is more valuable than peace – thus, Andrewes claims, the angels wish peace on earth, so the angelic hymn. *Angels being Heavenly Spirits, wish not anything at any time but Heavenly; so that a Heavenly thing is peace,*¹²⁸ thus angelic wants and desires are in perfect conformity with God's will. It is here, a year later, that Andrewes resolves the conundrum of the angels being an army and a choir. Angels are called to

¹²³ Lossky p.49, 86, 175, 211

¹²⁴ A.M. Allchin *Participation In God* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1988) pp. 15-23; Allchin also notes that theosis may be a part of Hooker's thought (Ibid pp.7-14), although there is no evidence that I have found where Hooker links this to becoming *ισαγγελοι*.

¹²⁵ E.g. Perkins: *Golden Chain* VII; Hutchinson p25; Arminius: *Priv. Disp.* XXV

¹²⁶ I:215

¹²⁷ V:460

ensure peace on earth and the worship of Christ, things which the devil constantly fights, and so to ensure they happen angels must fight and *keep on their armour still*.¹²⁹ This means the battle is not yet over, so the Incarnation did not replace angelic battling, but perhaps gave them an irretrievable advantage over Satan and his demons.

Returning now to the discussion about the rightness of praising God and His glory, and how God responds to this, Andrewes writes:

What harm then if the Angel should wish (praising Him) or commend it to men.¹³⁰

Here Andrewes sees no harm in angels commending the worship of God to men. Angels stir worship in men to praise and glorify God, and when men do it well, it is *music for an Angel*.¹³¹ As men are stirred and worship more, this moves them closer not only to a likeness with angels, but also to the angelic realm, since if praise was sung by men, *of very congruity, an Angel's song would be by men, when in some degree that drew something near to the Angel's estate*.¹³² The similarity between this, and the ideas seen in the works of the mediaeval English mystic Walter Hilton is striking. For Hilton, *Angel's Song* enables the soul to behold *spiritual things, virtues and angels, and heavenly things*, which allows men to be *touched and taught by God* -¹³³ ideas that parallel Andrewes concept of becoming ισαγγελοι.

¹²⁸ I:225

¹²⁹ I:227

¹³⁰ I:229-230 c.f. Hooker: Ecc. Pol. V:23; Origen: Comm. Cant. 3:14

¹³¹ I:231

¹³² I:231 (my italics)

¹³³ Hilton *On Angel's Song* – Ed. Windeatt *English Mystics of the Middle Ages* (CUP, 1994) pp.131-36

Andrewes again then links this growing likeness to angels directly to the Eucharist. He asks when is it that men reach this level of praise and worship, to make them ισαγγελοι?

And when is that men on earth come so? At what time? Sure, if any men do rise above themselves and approach in any sort near to those blessed spirits; if they ever be in a state with Angels and Archangels to laud and magnify His glorious name; if in all their lives they be in peace and charity, the bond of perfection, the *bona voluntas* of which we speak ... upon the taking of the Sacrament it is. ¹³⁴

If angels lead men to worship, and the Eucharist is the centre of worship, this indicates that angels are present at the Eucharist. The nature of being like the angels here is when men live in peace and love and the bond of perfection, which is different from the ontological angle previously noted, this being more of a harmonious Godly society – the Eucharist promoting that in men which would lead to this state. Along with the mystery of the Eucharist making men more like angels, Andrewes, in a similar vein to Chrysostom, makes mention of attraction of the mystery of the Real Presence to the angels. ¹³⁵ Andrewes exhorts men to be very much aware of the angels' presence and their witness and actions, which is reminiscent of both Hooker's and Bullinger's exhortations for men to have an understanding of angels:

¹³⁴ I:231

¹³⁵ Chrysostom: De Sacr 6:4; Adv. Anom 4

Time in music is much. And if we will keep time with the angels, (we must) do it (praise) when they do it ...(and it is) this day (i.e. the birth of Christ) they did it. ¹³⁶

The hymn is the desire of men's hearts to worship as angels do:

And what should we wish from our hearts but that the angels may have their wish, every one may have his due as it is here set out. ¹³⁷

The Patristic nature of the idea of angels attending the Eucharist and joining with men in worship is striking. While it is again reminiscent of Chrysostom, as quoted by Hooker, ¹³⁸ one also senses that Andrewes' thought is much wider than this. For example, one senses that he would have also agreed with Basil that the Psalms sung by men were the work of the angels and a *spiritual incense*. ¹³⁹

In *Of The Resurrection (John 20:11-17)* (1620), Andrewes again builds a line of thought based on the angels at the tomb, and begins it by paralleling angels with messengers of the Gospel. Talking of Mary Magdelene, his exposition of this story has developed well beyond what we saw in his 1608 sermon on Mark. He writes:

¹³⁶ I:231 c.f. Hooker: Ecc. Pol. I:4:2, I:16:4; Bullinger III:338

¹³⁷ I:232

¹³⁸ Ecc. Pol. V:25:2 c.f. Chrys: Hom. Heb.15

¹³⁹ c.f. Basil Hom. 10:2

Mary Magdalene staying still by the sepulchre, first she saw a vision of angels, and after, she saw Christ Himself. Saw Him, and herself was made an Angel by him, a good Angel to carry the Evangel. ¹⁴⁰

Andrewes makes a direct parallel between angels announcing Christ's first birth to the shepherds, and Mary announcing His second birth to the Apostles, ¹⁴¹ which is a movement away from the thought of the Prayer Book (but in line with Coverdale), which removed all reference to the angelic commission to Mary. ¹⁴² Here Mary is called an Angel, in terms of being a messenger of the Gospel for Christ. Later Andrewes looks at this with more depth, and uses an idea which looks like a model of angelic mediation of God, since men could not handle a direct meeting with God.

Though (Mary) saw not Christ at first, she sees His angels. For it so pleased Christ to come by degrees, His angels before Him. ¹⁴³

It is almost as if Andrewes sees the glory of Angels as a preparation for Mary to the greater glory of Christ, which shows the roles of a preparatory and intermediary. It is almost as if she needed to be eased into the situation, by first seeing angels, which then prepared her for seeing Christ face to face. Compared with his 1608 sermon where Andrewes cited angels as giving Mary a non-threatening manifestation as an indication of the joint society to men and angels to come, here it is a much more developed idea of a mediated and preparatory presence of Christ.

¹⁴⁰ III:4

¹⁴¹ III:5

¹⁴² Coverdale I:322ff c.f. See p.145 above.

¹⁴³ III:9

Andrewes, again, looking at the angels themselves, sees four parts to their role - their place; their habit (clothes); their site; and their order. As for place, it was in a tomb, and which is *a strange sight, a sight never seen before, for a grave is no place for angels*. Angels are blessed beings and graves are not blessed places.¹⁴⁴ Their clothes were all white, and this was a sign of the glory of the resurrection. The crucifixion was a dark and black day, but angels in white represent Christ being sinless, and that men will also walk in white, thanks to the resurrection. With the site in mind, Andrewes recognises that the angels are sitting and at rest, thus signifying that we too will be at rest in heaven, but he also points out the order, that while one sat by Christ's head, one sat at His feet. Why there? Andrewes knows it is a mystery, but posits a few suggestions. Looking at *Exodus 25:22*, he says perhaps it parallels the two cherubim on either side of the Ark of the Covenant, with Christ as the true Ark. Or perhaps it refers to Mary anointing His feet. His last suggestion is that it is a definitive symbol of the servant-hood of the angels, in that angels served Christ as both God and incarnate man, in heaven and in His grave,¹⁴⁵ and in that sense men are to copy the example of the angels. There is also the sense of order and hierarchy below God which needs to be observed, so this passage provides two more indicators of what it is to be *ισαγγελοι*.¹⁴⁶ From here, Andrewes' final point is another popular Patristic throwback:

¹⁴⁴ III:9

¹⁴⁵ III:10

¹⁴⁶ III:11

We shall go to our graves in white, in the comfort and colour of hope, lie between two angels there; there they guard our bodies dead, and present them alive again at the resurrection.¹⁴⁷

This is an idea closely paralleled in many Patristic and mediaeval thinkers, where, angels tended to the soul and took it into heaven, and is again an indication as how the years went by, he gained more and more from these sources.¹⁴⁸ Andrewes concludes the sermon with the point that, even though the angels spoke to Mary to try to convince and comfort her, it was only when Christ Himself appeared and revealed Himself to her, that she began to grasp what had happened. Angels may be wonderful creatures and have a God-given intermediary role, but ultimately, it is only Christ who could make her understand fully.¹⁴⁹

Just before his death, Andrewes demonstrates another, and perhaps his most extreme, mediaeval influence. It comes in the *Sermon on Psalm (2:7)* (1624) when Andrewes talks of the moment when Christ became incarnate in Mary's womb. To start with he says:

There is a very near resemblance betwixt begetting and speaking, To beget is to bring forth; so is to speak to bring forth also, to bring forth a word, and Christ you know is called the Word.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ III:10

¹⁴⁸ E.g. Origen: Hom. Num. 5:3; Basil: Hom. 19:9; Chrys.: Hom. Laz. 2:2

¹⁴⁹ III:14

¹⁵⁰ I:292-293

After a short detour describing God begetting the Word, men speaking words, and how the Holy Spirit is breathed upon people, Andrewes moves on to the Incarnation and when the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary and spoke to her. Andrewes says:

For how soon the angel's voice sounded in the blessed Virgin's ear,
instantly He was incarnate in the womb of His mother.¹⁵¹

Andrewes' idea of Gabriel being a literal vehicle for the Holy Spirit to beget Christ, is a very strange throwback to a popular mediaeval belief that Mary was impregnated through her ear. For example:

When Gabriel greeted her, and whispered in her ear,
In blissful time Christ was born, our Saviour she bore.

Again:

Through her ear she was with child; Gabriel said it to her.

And even more literally:

Blessed be, Lady, your right ear:
The Holy Ghost, he alighted in there.
Flesh and blood to take.

¹⁵¹ I:293

This is not seen in mainstream theological thought, but is seen mainly in poetry and popular literature, and so must be seen as Andrewes taking his Patristic and Mediaeval influences seriously, however beyond the explicit bounds of Scripture and tradition they might be.¹⁵²

This last point is a good indicator of Andrewes' own development, and that of the period in general. He developed in thought, approach and the sources he used, being willing to use sources to interpret and expand on Scripture, both Patristic and mediaeval, and from here let his angelology grow. This increased willingness to engage with a non-Protestant theological heritage, along with James' apparent interest in, and patronage of, the subject, led to further development in the 1620s under Donne and Forbes, who will be discussed in the coming chapter.

¹⁵² Examples cited in Gray pp.100-101

Chapter 7

The Golden Age Continued and Developed in High Church Anglicanism during the 1620s.

Introduction

For clarity, the remainder of the thesis will be split into five sections. This will both keep the thinkers of different groups together, and will also highlight how thought flowed and interacted in the period 1620-1650.

- (a) Chapter 7 will examine how those within the more High Church tradition dealt with angels, specifically how John Donne and William Forbes developed their thought in the 1620s, returning to a much more mediaeval and Patristic understanding of angels.
- (b) Chapter 8 will examine how the more Calvinist thinkers responded, and how they dealt with issues that arose from a developed angelology. This will cover the period from 1615-1640.
- (c) Chapter 9 will first ask how did the emergent rationalism view angels? The two main thinkers here being Lord Herbert of Cherbury and Thomas Hobbes who wrote in the early 1620s and early 1640s respectively.

(d) Chapter 9 will continue with the 1640s, and how thinkers from both wings of the Church reacted to these earlier moves and influences, including the Westminster Confession as a classic Calvinist statement of faith, as well as the very Patristic views of Jeremy Taylor.

(e) Finally, in chapter 10 comes Joseph Hall in the 1650s, who tried to develop an angelology which balanced Calvinism with the church's mediaeval and Patristic heritage, as well as taking into account the growing attacks from the rationalism of early enlightenment thinkers.

What is noticeable is how interest in angels during this period wasn't uniform across the whole church. During the Elizabethan period there was an almost uniform lack of interest, which grew to an interest under James, but one cannot say that angelology gripped the *whole* Church in this period. However, it is clear that a substantial growth did occur, and this growth happened across the various boundaries in the church. While the flowering High Church movement and growing anti-Calvinism would seem to be a fertile ground for angelology, some did not engage in the subject. The prime example of this is William Laud (1573-1645) none of whose voluminous writings talk of angels, besides a few baldly scriptural references to angelic protection in the context of liturgical prayer and private devotions,¹ and the use of Galatians 1:8 against Fisher the Jesuit.² Again, George Herbert's *The Country Parson*, never mentions angels, and he seemingly saw no practical use in having an understanding of angels. However, there are a number of examples of the expansion of interest in this period, the most important being John Donne and Bishop Forbes in the 1620s, who, while espousing

¹ Laud's Works (LACT) III:11, 100-101

² Laud II:9

two very different angelologies, were united in applying the idea of *adiaphora* to the area. While Hooker had implicitly applied this to his angelology, Donne and Forbes not only explicitly use it, they apply it far more widely than Hooker had done, allowing them to investigate areas previously closed off by Calvinists due to the lack of information in Scripture.

(1) John Donne (1571-1631)

John Donne was preacher, theologian and a poet. He was educated a Roman Catholic, but entered the Anglican church, being ordained in 1615 and becoming James I's chaplain that same year. He was made Dean of St. Paul's in 1621, where he served until his death in 1631. Despite his conversion, he still retained much of his Catholic past, and Matsuura notes that, in his poetry at least, Donne *exploits the riches of his scholastic knowledge of angels*.³ At this point is worth noting that I am only using Donne's sermons and not his poetry, since one cannot judge how much poetic licence he is using when discussing angels. As Matsuura writes:

In Donne's poems there is no consistency concerning the forms angels assume. He is not a philosopher, but a poet, who is free to pick up any possible variation of the angel's form, as each passage demands it, for the sake of poetical effect.⁴

³ K. Matsuura *A Study of Donne's Imagery* (Tokyo: Kenkyusha, 1953) p.29

⁴ Matsuura p.40 (For this reason too I have not discussed Herbert's, or others', poetry either, focussing solely on his other works.)

Generally, his theology was one of fierce anti-Calvinism, and of anti-Catholicism, being an Arminian who sat between the two extremes, as he saw it.⁵ His main concern was to maintain and preserve two central truths – God’s absolute omnipotence, and the true free will given to His creatures.⁶ These concerns are visible in his angelology. He also had a high view of Church ministry and preaching, which also impacted on his angelology.⁷

My approach will be to deal with subjects thematically, but Donne had the habit of moving off on tangents from within other discussions, and so to keep the flow and context of his thought intact, I will, on occasions, follow these tangents despite the thematic headings.

(A) The Difficulty of the Subject.

While Donne wrote extensively about angels, he was not unaware of the difficulty of subject:

We have better means to know the nature of God, than of angels, because God has manifested Himself more in actions than angels have done: we know what they are by what they have done; and it is very little that is related to us what angels have done.⁸

⁵ P.M. Oliver *Donne's Religious Writings* (London: Longman, 1997) p.5, 249; W.R. Mueller *John Donne: Preacher* (Princeton University Press, 1962) p.193

⁶ Mueller p.179

⁷ Oliver pp.240-1, 252

⁸ Ed. H. Alford *The Works of John Donne* (Vols. I – VI) (London: John W. Parker, 1839): VI:155

For Donne, it is far clearer what God has done, than what angels have done. Little is said in Scripture about angels, and a feature of his thought is that absolute clarity is not possible on the subject, yet as we shall observe, well-reasoned speculation, non-dogmatically asserted, was eminently possible. He also wrote:

When we would tell you what those angels of God in heaven, to which we are compared, are, we can come no nearer telling you that, than by telling you we cannot tell. The angels must be content with negative expressing.⁹

In angelology no certain answers can be found, and an apophatic principle needs to be applied to it. However, in the same vein as Bullinger, Hooker and Andrewes, this does not stop him trying to bring light into the area. Donne notes some of the difficulties with the subject:

We know they are spirits in nature, but what the nature of the spirit is, we do not know; we know there are angels in office, appointed to execute God's will upon us, but how a spirit executes these bodily actions, that angels do, in their own motion, and in the transportation of other things, we know not; we know they are creatures, but whether created with this world (as all our later men are inclined to think), or long before (as all the Greek, and some Latin fathers thought), we know not.¹⁰

⁹ Donne IV:12

¹⁰ IV:12

And so it continues. Donne looks at orders and hierarchy, saying that different Fathers said different things, so he sides with Augustine and pleads ignorance. He also says that even though angels are around 6000 years old (Donne accepting a dating scheme similar to that proposed by Ussher) they show no age. Following Aquinas and Gregory Nazianzen, yet in opposition to Arminius who saw the angelic nature as opposite to man's, Donne says they *hang between the nature of God, and the nature of man, and are of a middle condition. ... and they are the riddles of Heaven, and the perplexities of speculation.* ¹¹ However, riddles and perplexities didn't stop Donne investigating angels, as we shall see.

(B) Angelic Creation and Fall.

Flowing from his Catholic past, Donne accepted that angels were created as part of *light*. While discussing the idea that God is the *Father of Lights*, ¹² Donne, looking at what *light* is, says all light comes from, or emanates from, God. These lights, in the first part, are the angels, as many Fathers claimed. Secondary lights, which serve the first, are the angels of the church, or pastors or other holy men, since Christ said *You are the light of the world*. Like many others, Donne accepted the idea that the angels of the churches in Revelation were men not angels, and whole idea of pastors being angels will be discussed later. ¹³ From here lesser lights are named, such as the light that lit Moses' face after speaking to God. Thus Donne ends by saying:

¹¹ IV:13 c.f. Greg. Naz.: Th. Or. II:3; Aquinas: S.T. 1a:LXI:3 c.f. Arminius: Priv. Disp. XXV:3

¹² II:148

¹³ c.f. I:448; Bale p.305 ; Hooker: Ecc. Pol. V:23 c.f. Latimer II:118; Becon III:37

Take these lights of which St. James speaks, in any apprehension, any way, angels of heaven who are ministering, angels of the church, who are spiritual ministers; take it for the light of faith for hearing, the light of reason from discoursing, or the light flowing from the creature to us, by contemplation, and observation of nature; every way, by every light we see, he is Pater luminum.¹⁴

All these forms of light (angels, humans, enlightenment and the spiritual life) all come from God, and work together within God's plan. Thus, as Hooker would have agreed, there is a fundamental unity and interaction between all creatures and Creation. This interconnectedness will be more fully explained as the section goes on.

In another sermon, though, Donne is less than sure about whether angels were created with *light*, saying it was too speculative for a decision of certainty to be made,¹⁵ but says that angels are light, so when else would they have been created than with the light? Donne said that Moses spoke nothing of the fall, or of the confirmation of angels, and so, Donne thinks, it is reasonable to assume that he spoke nothing of the creation of angels either. However, Donne concludes that the angelic creation is found in the phrase *The heavens*, and that they were made in this phase of creation. To then narrow down the angelic creation from *heavens* to *light* is too speculative, and since no Creed demands it, Donne won't accept it as dogma, however, he sees it as the most likely answer.¹⁶ Donne also asks whether they were created before, or with, the world. He rehearses various Patristic views, and comes to the conclusion, based on

¹⁴ II:148-9

¹⁵ I:433

¹⁶ I:433ff

Augustine, that it is not a vital part of the faith as to when angels were created, only that one must *never* say that angels are co-eternal or co-creators with God.

Angels as beings of light, created as light, seem to be the root cause of their own fall. Donne writes that *light is God's eldest child, his first born of all creatures; and it is ordinarily received that the angels are twins with the light, made when light was made. And then the first act, that these angels fell, did, was an act of pride.*¹⁷ Angels fell due to pride, and Donne seems to favour the instantaneous view, when there was no gap between creation and fall, since the *first act* was sin. What sin was this? Donne follows a line similar to that of Hooker and Salkeld:

They did not thank nor praise God for their creation; (which should have been their first act); they did not solicit, nor pray to God for their sustenance, their melioration, their confirmation; (so they should have proceeded), but the first act that those first creatures did was an act of pride, *a proud reflecting upon themselves*, a proud overvaluing of their condition, and an acquiescence in that, in an imaginary possibility of standing by themselves, without any further relation, or beholdingness to God.¹⁸

Angels looked upon themselves and were proud of their nature, instead of grateful and full of praise and wonder for it. Their wonderful nature led them to believe that they could stand without God, and could sustain themselves. Moving beyond both Hooker (who saw it as a proud self-reflection) and Salkeld (who saw the self-reflection leading

¹⁷ III:287

¹⁸ III:287 (my italics)

to a rejection of God's government), ¹⁹ Donne sees this pride as a pride that is fundamentally different from that which man can produce:

This first pride in the angels was a positive, a radical pride. The Pharisee is but proud (but) this is a comparative pride. No king thinks himself great, yet he is proud he is independent, sovereign, subject to none. ... But this pride in those angels in heaven, was a positive pride; there were no other creatures yet made, with whom the angels could compare themselves, and before whom the angels could prefer themselves, and yet before there was any other creature but themselves, any other creature, to undervalue, or insult over, these angels were proud of themselves. So early, so primary a sin as pride.²⁰

What Donne is saying is that when man sins, it is due to external factors (i.e. living in a fallen world with fallen people). However, angels were created with no distractions in a non-sinful environment. ²¹ When they were created it was just them and God, and they had nothing else to experience but the fullness of God - except themselves. Even in man's pride and sin, he realises he is dependent on others, but the angels thought they could be independent and self-sufficient without God, which, when faced with God and no other distractions, is a rejection of Him of enormous magnitude.²² It also means that there is no other form of evangelising possible, since if the fullness of God with no distractions or obstructions by other parts of creation is not enough to hold an

¹⁹ Hooker: Ecc. Pol I:4:3; Salkeld: Treatise – Chpt. 49-51

²⁰ III:287-8

²¹ c.f. V:42

²² c.f. IV:149

angel's attention and elicit praise then *literally* nothing will. This is why their sin was so unforgivable, and why there is no other way of reaching them, and this is what Donne says elsewhere:

In the case of the angels, not for looking upon other creatures, or trusting in them (for, when they fell, as it is ordinarily received, there were no other creatures made) but for not looking immediately, directly upon God, but *reflecting upon themselves*, and trusting in their own natural parts, God threw those angels into so irrevocable, and a bottomless, depth, as that the merits of Christ Jesus, though infinite and super-infinite value, do not buoy them up.²³

This seems to raise the question whether there is a limit to Christ's merit and ability to save, but in the face of what Donne sees the primary sin as, if angels reject the Triune God as unnecessary for them, there is no way that they would then accept God incarnate as a better option. Thus Donne wouldn't see the judgement of the demons as God giving angels one chance which they either took or not, as other contemporaries did, nor as an elective act.²⁴ For Donne, the radical nature of the sin and abuse of free will meant that no other chance was actually possible, since their choice and subsequent sin eliminated every other possibility of redemption.

This view of the angelic fall fits neatly with his wider thought. As an anti-Calvinist, just as he would have had a place for men to respond to God freely, so he gives that opportunity to the angels as well. His view is also a variation on previous thinkers. For

²³ V:291 (my italics) c.f. Hooker: Ecc. Pol. I:4:3

²⁴ E.g. Arminius: Disc. Junius Ans. Rep. 10th Prop (Works III:133)

example, Gregory of Nazianzus cited jealousy of man as the reason for their fall, and Augustine cited jealousy of God, whereas Donne builds on Hooker and Salkeld, who cited a pride of their own being.²⁵

Elsewhere, Donne further details how he envisages the angelic fall and its repercussions. During a critique of scholastic speculation suggesting there was an interval between the time the angels sinned, and their expulsion from heaven, which gave them angels a chance to repent, Donne gives a resounding *No!*²⁶ The essential argument is *If God's grace allows men the opportunity to repent, surely He must have extended that opportunity to the angels.* Donne talks of speculation that the battle between Michael and Satan in Revelation 12 was actually a disputation where the good angels tried to evangelise the demons back into heaven, and he mentions those who saw it as possible for demons now expelled to be taken back, since they too can hear the Gospel preached on earth and be swayed by it.²⁷ Donne rejects this as a mercy so big that it stops being mercy, and becomes a blind acceptance of sin and rejection of God – and in the light of how Donne sees the primary sin, this is a logical stance to take.²⁸

This decision by God not to rescue the angels from their sin, was further confirmed by the Incarnation. Angels were not saved because Christ took on a human nature, not an angelic nature, which fits with the widely held Christological axiom that *That which is not assumed, is not healed.*²⁹ Even though Origen uniquely thought otherwise,³⁰ an

²⁵ Aug.: DGnL XI:14, 18; Nyssa: Dis. Cat. 6:5: See pp.30ff, 214-215, 253 above.

²⁶ I:489ff

²⁷ I:491 e.g. Origen, Ambrose and Prudentius cited.

²⁸ c.f. II:64

²⁹ Greg. Naz.: Ep 101

³⁰ Hom. Lk. 1:3; Comm. John 1:31; Hom. Gen. 8:8 c.f. Scott pp.141-2

angelic nature was not assumed by Christ, thus God made sure that the angelic nature could not be redeemed.³¹ This is the end result of the angel's sin - no angelic incarnation happened, as, in the light of the magnitude of the sin, it would have been a pointless exercise anyway, so no redemption was possible, and so none was offered.

Further repercussions of the angelic fall are noted when Donne talks of angelic ordering:

All was disordered by sin; for in sin (there) is no order, no conformity, nothing but disorder and confusion. (Scholastics) generally acknowledge a distinction of orders in the ministering spirits of heaven, now, angels and archangels, and others, yet they dispute, and doubt, and (in the great part) deny the distinction of orders was before the fall of the angels; for, they confess this distribution into orders, to have been upon their submission, and recognition of God's government, which recognition was their very confirmation, and after that they could not fall.³²

Following Aquinas, Donne suggests hierarchies were instituted post-angelic fall, and that the angelic recognition of God's government was the very thing that confirmed them.³³ Therefore, Donne's model for the good angels seems to be that they were to first look upon God, and from there recognise His government, and then submit to be put into the hierarchies, which confirmed them in their position as good angels and not

³¹ II:73

³² II:119 c.f. V:384

³³ S.T. 1a:CVIII:5-8

demons. For the demons it is less clear, but one could deduce that *their overvaluing of their condition*, led to a rejection of God's government over them, and therefore an ejection from His hierarchies and thus His confirmation.

(C) Angelic Confirmation and its Implications.

Thus Donne clearly holds to angelic confirmation, but for Donne this has implications which he needs to explain and resolve. For example, angelic confirmation is usually linked with an inability to sin, or to operate outside the will of God, and since Donne held to a true irresistibility of grace, this was a clear-cut position for him to take.³⁴ However, in this light, he was confused by Job 4:18 - *Behold, he put no trust in his servants, and his angels he charged with folly.*

For example, how can one be sinless, yet in folly? An Easter sermon was an opportunity to examine this in more depth, and Donne begins by saying that men will become like the angels, but this should not lead men to *flatter ourselves in a dream of a better estate than the angels have, (since) in this text we have an intimation what their state and condition is.*³⁵ He divides the sermon in three - first, to examine if angels means angels, and not human messengers or evil angels; second, what the implications are of this for men becoming like the angels; and the third point develops one made elsewhere, that if angels stand by grace, and not by any natural means, then this is what man must also expect, for *God has done no more for the best of us, here, nor hereafter, than for those angels, and of them we*

³⁴ Oliver p.257

³⁵ I:429

hear here. ³⁶ Man will be sinless in heaven, as angels now are. In other words, Donne is asking *What is angelic confirmation, and how does it work?*

Donne deals with the first point via an attack on Rome, saying whatever the English Church says, Rome will criticise it, and so he effectively says, *Let's look at the text, and let itself decide.* Using Patristic opinions, he comes to the conclusion that:

We take this then, as all do, all, to be spoken of angels, which was our first problem and disquisition; and our second is, being spoken of angels, of what are they spoken, good or bad? ³⁷

This second question is more vexing for Donne - surely angels acting in folly can only be demons? This is quickly rejected, yet while he says that the majority of theologians interpret the text being about good angels, there are some notable dissenters, who, while admitting they were good, saw it as verse describing angels as somehow weak or defective. For example, Jerome wondered why we would need to judge angels (I Cor. 6:3) if they were perfect in their work? ³⁸ Donne says Calvin too had doubts, but made it clear that error was not sin, so angels could still be regarded as sinless, while not doing a perfect job - since only God Himself is truly flawless and perfect. ³⁹ Using Augustine, Donne affirms that no-one must ever say that angels can now fall, but he still wonders – *Why should it be that angels who could once fall, now cannot?* The standard answer is that God has somehow confirmed them in a state where they cannot fall, but how, or when did this confirmation happen, and how does it work in them, if

³⁶ I:430

³⁷ I:431

³⁸ Donne notes Origen: Hom. Num. 20, 22, 24, 26, Hom. Luke. 13; Jerome: Comm. Malachi 1:8

God can *charge them with folly*? Using a similar distinction as found in Salkeld, he says:

That angels were created *viatores*, and not *beati*, in a possibility of everlasting blessedness, but not in actual possession of it, admits no doubt, because some of them did actually fall. ⁴⁰

This echoes Basil's idea that angels were created with the theoretical possibility of standing without God, but reality meant that in the end they would sin and fall. ⁴¹

Donne now asks *What caused their fall*? We have already cited the reason Donne gives in this sermon, but one can now see that angels could have looked at themselves and truly thought that they could stand alone. Donne mentions Augustine, who said that *if they had applied themselves to God, they should have become (what God intended them to be)*, which parallels Hooker's idea of angelic potentiality, where angels were to live sinlessly and reach their God-ordained goal, but needed God's grace to actually do it. ⁴² Yet Donne goes on and, agreeing with Jerome, says:

They were not created in a state of blessedness but in the way to it; and (they were) mere spirits; but if we compare them to God, there was a certain fleshiness ... a slipperiness of falling into a worse state, for anything that was in their nature; and the nature of those that fell,

³⁹ I:431-2; c.f. John Calvin *Sermons on Job* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1993) pp.73-4

⁴⁰ I:434-5 c.f. Salkeld: *An Treatise* – Chpt. 34-5

⁴¹ Basil: *De Sp. Sanct.* 16

⁴² Ecc. Pol. I:4:3 - c.f. I:435 : "Though angels do not sin, if they were left to themselves, they might sin."

and those that stood, is all one, neither is their nature that do stand, changed by the benefit of their confirmation.⁴³

Confirmation is the addition of an extra grace, but contrary to Arminius (who saw immortality as a part of their initial created state, not their confirmation), it is this added grace which makes them immortal.⁴⁴ They were not immortal before, since they proceeded from nothing, and so could also return to nothing.

Yet, if angels are, in their confirmed state infallible and immortal, how can God then charge them with folly? Donne recounts a story, to explain himself. A Saracen king had a court full of heretical Eutychian bishops, who said that the divine nature of Christ could suffer. He asked *Can Michael the Archangel die?* - an idea they rejected with scorn. So the king replied. *If an angelic nature is impassible, and so cannot suffer and die, how then can Christ's impassible nature suffer and die?* Thus, when confirmed, angels are impassible in nature, as all theologians for 1500 years have agreed.⁴⁵ Thus Donne can say:

Angels are impassible, they cannot sin, cannot die (but) if they were left to themselves, without the support of additional grace, they might (do all these).⁴⁶

⁴³ I:435 c.f. IV:15

⁴⁴ Arminius: Priv. Disp. XXV:4

⁴⁵ I:436-7

⁴⁶ I:437

God, therefore, cannot *so trust these servants, nor so discharge them of all their weakness, but that they might fall, but for the support of grace, which is their confirmation.* Thus, driven by his view of an irresistibility and perfection of grace, the meaning of Job 4:18 is that folly or error is an inherent potentiality towards sin (not actual sin), if not supported by God's confirming grace.

How is this grace conferred to them? Donne explains later on:

In Christ certainly. In Christ, the Father reconciled to Himself all things in heaven and on earth. How? Not as redeemer; for those that fell, and thereby need a redemption, never were, never shall be redeemed; but as Mediator, an Intercessor on their behalf, that those that do stand, shall stand forever.⁴⁷

Since Christ reconciled all things in heaven and on earth, it must be via Him. It cannot be as Redeemer, since only fallen beings need redeeming, and the angels never fell, so, in opposition to the opinion of Arminius, Christ does it by being a mediator and intercessor, pleading their case before God to allow them to stand. For both angels and men, Christ is the propitiation, but men are redeemed, and angels are interceded for. It can be then said that angels receive forgiveness for sins they never committed, but would have committed if they had not had God's grace given to them.

From here Donne moves on to the second point of the sermon, and notes that God will give humans immortal bodies that will not sin in the resurrection, and these will be

⁴⁷ I:438

immortal by grace not nature – just like the angels (ισαγγελοι). From Luke 20:36, Donne says that angels in heaven do not marry, the primary reason being that since angels are immortal, eternal, and do not die, they do not need to have children. Also, it is sin that brings death, so since they are sinless, they cannot die. Thus the state of being ισαγγελος means to be immortal and sinless. Using Augustine, Donne then develops this to say that the idea of becoming ισαγγελος is:

Succession into the place of angels that are fallen, and of an association, and assimilation to those angels that stand. Our assimilation is this, that as they have in their station, we shall also have in ours, a faithful certitude, that we shall never fall out of the arms and bosom of our gracious God.⁴⁸

Whereas Andrewes saw men becoming ισαγγελοι in terms of being and action, and to be seen here on earth, Donne sees it as a question of permanence in a new position in heaven, and of replacing the fallen angels - a definite difference of opinion. Elsewhere, Donne says that to reach this state, one must be in heaven, therefore it is not to be looked for or expected here on earth.⁴⁹ So the ultimate meaning of becoming ισαγγελοι is a heavenly and not earthly state, with the replacing of the fallen angels, immortality and sinlessness.

Moving to his third point, Donne says that the grace which confirms the angels is a:

⁴⁸ I:441 c.f. V:25, 500; Funeral Elegies (VI:514); c.f. Aug.: Ench. 29
⁴⁹ IV:4

... continual succession and supply of grace ...(and God) perpetually superinfuses upon them more and more beams of glory.⁵⁰

Confirmation is more than the choice of the angels to accept God's government - it is the angels choosing to accept His government and then God then giving them the grace (as a rolling infusion, not a single act) to do this without fault or failing. These beams of glory are the same as those which were seen at the Transfiguration, and this light is the Beatific Vision. Donne concludes:

God made the angels all of one natural condition, in nature all alike; and God gave them all such grace, as that thereby they might have stood; and them that used that grace aright, he gave further, a continual succession of grace, and that is their confirmation; not that they cannot, but that they should not fall; not that they are safe in themselves, but by God's preservation (are) safe.⁵¹

From this point, realising that angels were confirmed in order to prevent them from falling into to sin, it is natural to ask how this relates to God's wider reconciliation of creation, and how Donne conceives this.

In a sermon on the Nativity, he explains that through the incarnation reconciliation was wrought, and it is interesting to note as we go through the sermon, that as one who held to an idea of progressive sanctification and an emphasis on freewill, how Donne sees that the angelic reconciliation parallels how men are reconciled. Donne writes:

⁵⁰ I:441-2

⁵¹ I:442

All things are reconciled to (God) in Christ, that is, offered a way of reconciliation. All things in heaven and on earth, says the Apostle. ... If we consider those who are in heaven, and been so from the first minute of their creation, angels, why have they, or how have they any reconciliation? How needed they any, and then how is this of Christ applied unto them? ⁵²

As previously seen, angels were created in blessedness, but not in perfect blessedness, thus they were able to fall - and some did. For those that fell, reconciling themselves was impossible, as it is for Man, since the destructive effects of sin are identical. ⁵³
From here, he writes:

To those angels that stood, their standing being of grace, and their confirmation being not one transient act in God done at once, but a continual succession and emanation of daily grace, belongs this reconciliation by Christ, *because all matters of grace*, and where any deficiency is to be supplied, whether by reparation, as in man, or by way of confirmation, as angels, *proceeds from the cross*, from the merits of Christ. ⁵⁴

.. This does not easily fit with the Augustinian idea, which we have seen no reason so far that Donne rejected, that Christ did not die for the angels, but it does recognise the idea

⁵² I:17

⁵³ I:18 – “*They are both equally incapable to change to better.*”

⁵⁴ I:18 (My italics)

in Colossians 1 that it was the cross where angelic reconciliation was made effective.⁵⁵ Christ, in terms of the incarnation, did not die specifically for the angels, but they benefited from it anyway, yet at this point Donne does not explain how. He presents again the idea that confirmation was not a single, once and for all act, but a constant rolling infusion of grace, which would fit an idea of progressive, ongoing, sanctification. To continue:

They are so reconciled then, as that they are *extra lapsus periculum*, out of the danger of falling; but yet this stability, this infallibility, is not yet indelibly imprinted in their natures; yet the angels might fall if this reconciler did not sustain them.

After Donne has restated this basis, he adds further detail:

For if those words, that God found (error) in his angels (*Job 4:18*), be understood of the good angels that stand confirmed, (as without all doubt they cannot be understood of the ill angels) the best service of the best angels, divested of that successive grace that supports them, if God should exact rigorous account of it, could not be acceptable in the sight of God: so the angels have a pacification and a reconciliation, lest they should fall. ⁵⁶

This is a clear move against the idea of salvation as a once and for all elective act of God, since it is not *indelibly imprinted* and angels might fall again, since they are

⁵⁵ Aug.: Ench. 61-62

⁵⁶ I:18

only worthy due to God's constant infusion of sustaining grace. Now Donne has posited a joint reconciliation in Christ, he develops this *jointness* by looking at Ephesians 1:10:

God might gather together in one, all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him; where the word which we translate *to gather*, properly signifies *recapitulare*, to bring all things to their first head, to God's first purpose; which was, that angels and men, united in Christ Jesus, might glorify him eternally in the kingdom of heaven. Then are things in heaven restored and reconciled (says St. Augustine), when good men have repaired the ruin of the bad angels, and filled their places. And then are things on earth restored and reconciled ... when man by humility are exalted to those places from which angels fell by pride, then are all things in heaven and earth reconciled in Christ.⁵⁷

As seen before, the Augustinian idea of man entering heaven alongside the angels is taught, and one senses that the force of his argument is to say that God uses similar methods to save and sanctify men and angels, since they will share heaven together in the future. Donne then moves to try and explain the question he had just previously left hanging in the air *How did Christ's death benefit the angels?* He perhaps alludes to Ignatius of Antioch's idea that it is the blood of Christ that achieves the angels' confirmation and the joint society:

⁵⁷ I:19

The blood of the cross of Christ has had this effect in *sancto sanctorum*, even in the highest heaven, in supplying their places that fell, in confirming them that stood, and in uniting us and them in Himself as head of all.⁵⁸

This highlights the distinction in Donne's mind about Christ dying for men and angels, as it is His blood, the sacrifice, that reconciles the angels, not the incarnation as the God/man.

(D) Angelic Ministry.

The close association of angels and men, with men becoming ἱσαγγελοι in order to join the angelic ranks to make up for the angels that fell, indicates a close relationship between the two groups, and brings to mind exactly how angelic ministry works and benefits men.

Continuing in the same sermon, Donne echoes a point made by Hooker, that the purpose of existence is to reach the goal of your being (described as becoming as like God as possible). Donne says that *the best thing that they can do is the performance of that for which they were made*,⁵⁹ which indicates that angelic ministry flows from an inherent need within their nature to reach their God-given goal.

He then says:

⁵⁸ I:17 c.f. I:238 c.f. Ignatius: Ep. Smyrn. 6

⁵⁹ II:276 c.f. Hooker: Ecc Pol I:4:1

Both angels and we have the image of God imprinted in us; the angels have it not *in summo*, though they have it *in tuto*; They have it not in the highest degree (only Christ has), but they have it in a deep impression (it is imprinted on the very faculties of the soul), so as they cannot lose it or deface it. We have this image of God so as that we cannot lose it, but we may, and do, deface it. ⁶⁰

Thus angels and men both have God's image, but not in exactly the same sense. Elsewhere Donne goes on to add detail to this basic picture:

This image of God, even in the angels, being reason, and the best act of rectified reason, the doing of that for which they were made, it is that which angels are naturally inclined to do, to be always present for the assistance of man. ⁶¹

Thus angels acting on the Reason imprinted on their souls by God's image, is the motivation for their ministry. How does this relate to the fallen angels, when the image of God is a deep impression on their very soul, so deep it cannot be defaced? One could think that angels were not initially created with this image, but that it was later given to them, perhaps as a part of their confirmation. However, this is not a neat solution, since when the angels fell they must have fallen from a place of knowledge and understanding, so not to have their image and goal (within the context of fulfilment by submitting to God) in mind, makes their fall and subsequent eternal condemnation an unfair act. The answer is probably that the image, initially, was not

⁶⁰ II:276

⁶¹ II:277

deep, so it could be defaced by sin, but confirmation made it deep and undefaceable. In another sermon Donne writes:

The image of God shall never depart our soul; no, not when the soul departs from the body ... In my form, in that image which I am made by, I cannot die ...(and) that this image is not the image of angels to whom we shall be like, but it is by the same life, by which those angels were made, the image of God himself. ⁶²

Even though both men and angels have the image of God, and the notion of men becoming ἰσαγγελοι could suggest that this is conceived in a similar sense, Donne clearly sees a difference between the two. Exactly, how they differ is not discussed, but their similarities, are *reason, understanding, knowledge, discourse, consideration. Angels and men have grace too, that is infinitely better than their reason.* ⁶³

Thus angelic ministry flows from what may be called *Reason confirmed by God's grace in action*, ⁶⁴ and this ministry is directed towards men, but what form does it take? In a sermon on Revelation 7:2-3, Donne talks of how men receive light and strength, and says:

And this light and strength here proposed to, is the assistance of an angel. Which being first understood of angels, in general, affords a

⁶² IV:493-4

⁶³ II:275-6

⁶⁴ My phrase.

great measure of comfort to us, because the angels are *seduli animae pedissequae*, faithful and diligent upon all our steps. They do so; they do attend the service and good of man, because it is *illorum optimum*, it is the best thing that angels (as angels) can do, to do so. For evermore it is best for everything to do that for which it was ordained and made; and they were made angels for the service and assistance of man. *Unum tui et angeli optimum est*. Man and angels have one and the same thing in them, which is better than anything else that they have; nothing has it but they, and both they have it.⁶⁵

Again, we see the idea that angels faithfully and diligently serving men is the *best thing that angels can do* since it is *best for everything to do that for which is ordained and made* – ministry flows from fulfilling one’s God-given goal. Yet it is worth noting here that this is said of angels in general, which indicates that there might be something more specific – something, perhaps, indicative of a belief in Guardian Angels, and this is pointed to elsewhere in his writings, including his poetry.

Donne, talking of Paul’s thorn in the flesh, says it was Satan, and not *a tutelar, a guardian angel, to present good motions to him*, which suggests that Donne believed, in some form of Guardian Angel who moved men.⁶⁶ Elsewhere Donne adds more detail saying that men are not bound to confess they have Guardian Angels, but this does not mean that angels are not always watching over us:

⁶⁵ II:275

⁶⁶ IV:387 c.f. V:356; c.f. Funeral Elegies (VI:507-8, 527)

Though we bind you not to a necessity of believing that every man has a particular angel (enjoy your Christian liberty in that, and think in that point so as you shall find your devotion most exalted, by thinking that it is, or is not so) yet know, that you do all you do, in the presence of God's angels. ⁶⁷

Donne here has defined a defence of the existence of Guardian Angels with a method that Calvinists would have felt very uncomfortable with. Calvinists would have said that they are not explicitly defined in Scripture, and thus either do not exist, or should not be examined *because* they are not explicitly defined. Donne, however, says that one is not dogmatically bound to believe in them (probably due to the inconclusive Scriptural evidence), but it is helpful to do so (or not) in order to improve one's devotional life since, in line with Tertullain and Cyprian, man is in the presence of angels. ⁶⁸ The truth about Guardian Angels is now not a purely Scriptural question, but one where if it helps to believe it, one should do so.

Mainly, though, Donne talks of angels in the context of the providence God provides, and in his mind, God's providence is expressed in a three-fold form – Christ, the Angels, other men:

We also have another security, more immediate, and more applicable to us ... So besides this general assistance of angels, and besides this

⁶⁷ II:226

⁶⁸ Tert.: De. Or. 16; Cyprian: De. Or. 32-33 – Men should aspire to a prayerful and holy life since they are in the presence of angels.

all sufficiency of the angel of the covenant, Christ Jesus, we have for our security, the servants of Christ too.⁶⁹

Angels are placed within the wider framework of ministry, providence and cosmology. As with Hooker, Donne envisages an inter-linked system.⁷⁰ The system he describes is one where the Church plays a pivotal role – a central part of his wider thought:⁷¹

The ministry of celestial angels is inferior to the ministry of the ecclesiastical; the Gospel (which belongs to us) is truly *evangelium*, the good ministry of good angels, the best ministry of the best angels; for though we compare not with those angels in nature, we compare with them in office; though our offices tend to the same end (to draw you near to God) yet they differ in the way; and though the service of those angels enlighten your understanding, and assist your belief too, yet in the ministry of these angels of the church, there is a blessed verification of the words *Now is salvation nearer, than when you believed*.⁷²

There is much in this passage. To begin with angelic ministry is inferior to that exercised by humans in the Church, and men's works do compare with the angels'; angels draw people near to God, enlighten them and assist belief – very much a Patristic and mediaeval view point, but again their ministry is inferior to that which human ministers exercise within the Church. Donne then asks *Why do you believe?*

⁶⁹ II:279

⁷⁰ II:280

⁷¹ Oliver pp.240-1

⁷² II:280

You believe, because those celestial angels have wrought invisibly upon you, and dispersed your clouds, and removed impediments ... yet salvation is nearer to you, in having all this applied to you by (angels).⁷³

Angels work invisibly on people to remove the clouds that block belief and remove impediments to belief, just as human ministers do. People believe *because* of the work of angels. Not only is angelic ministry paralleled with Church ministry, but Donne clearly attributes to angels a form of evangelistic ministry, or at least a ministry of turning men towards God.

In this light, it is noticeable that Donne is very careful not to build too great a picture of a mediated faith. Angels work in many areas of human life, in a real and true way, leading men toward salvation, but Donne very squarely subordinates this to the ministry of the Church, since for Donne it is primarily through the Church that God works for men.⁷⁴ Angelic ministry is important, but secondary to that of men, and he is careful to state its reality with no exaltation.

⁷³ II:280

⁷⁴ Mueller p.176

(E) Angelic Knowledge.

Previous sections have indicated how angelic ministry flows from confirmed Reason in action, and it is no surprise that Donne addresses angelic knowledge and links it to angelic ministry. To start with, Donne acknowledges there are limitation:

The angels saw God; did they not see (the mystery of the Gospel) in God? No, for these things were hid in God; and the angels see no more of God than God reveals to them.⁷⁵

Thus Donne clearly limits angelic knowledge, but he adds a number of interesting qualifications to this basic position.

Donne describes how God can see into a man's heart and know his thoughts, and he quotes Ecclesiastes 10:20, saying that to apply this verse to angels is probably stretching its interpretation, but nonetheless he will, writing:

Those that have wings, shall declare the matter, God employs so many informers, as angels; it is not an office unworthy of the angels of heaven, much less of any angels of the church [i.e. human ministers] (no, not though it be delivered by way of confession) to discover any disloyal purposes; though in other cases, by our own canons, that seal of confession lay justly a strong obligation upon us, and God gives angels an ability, a faculty, which in their nature they have not, that is,

⁷⁵ III:181 c.f. I:208-9; V:426

to know thoughts, for this purpose, for the discovery of such irreverent and disloyal hearts. Angels do not know thoughts naturally, yet to this purpose they shall know thoughts, says God.⁷⁶

The reference to the Church's own Canons is noteworthy here. The only Canon which touches on confession (apart from those condemning auricular confession)⁷⁷ is from 1603 which, specifically in the context of one who has committed a crime and wanted to unburden his conscience, says:

If any man confess his secret and hidden sins to the minister, for the unburdening of his conscience, and to receive spiritual consolation and ease of mind from (the minister is not to reveal it, unless it concerns treason).⁷⁸

The mentioning of disloyal hearts toward God, and treason in the Canon, perhaps suggests that angels were used by God to keep men from abandoning the faith. It is not clear, but it is sure that angels can see into the thoughts and hearts of men, and report sin to God. Other thinkers had seen an ability to read minds would give them a power close to omnipotence or omnipresence, and so rejected the idea,⁷⁹ yet Donne wants to say that angels are able to, in order to enable them to minister to men. To circumvent this problem, Donne makes this ability a specific gift from God, and only in certain

⁷⁶ I:182

⁷⁷ E.g. *General Note of Matters To Be Moved By Clergy* (1563) 3:38 and *Attitudes For Ecclesiastical Government* No. 53 cited in Ed. G. Bray *The Anglican Canons 1529-1947* (Church of England Record Society, Boydell Press, 1998) p.735, 760

⁷⁸ Canon 113 cited in Bray p.413

⁷⁹ Duns Scotus said angels could read minds c.f. Matsuura p43; Aquinas S.T. 1a:CXI:1-4

circumstances - this is clear since it is *not in their nature* - and this is different from Aquinas, and those walking in his footsteps, who said that it is an intrinsic ability of an angel to be able, to a certain extent, to read men's hearts, though not to the same extent that God can, and this was not limited to specific God-ordained situations.⁸⁰

Therefore, in Donne's mind there is a paralleling of the ministry men and angels, and in this light he sometimes calls men angels. In a sermon preached on Trinity Sunday, Donne talks about the visitation to Abraham by the three people, whom initially Abraham took them to be men, and for this reason, Hebrews 12:3 says one should show hospitality just in case it is an angel of God.⁸¹ However, Donne defines these angels who need hospitality further, saying:

(In the early church) there was a care of hospitality, but such, as angels, that is, angelical, good and religious men, and truly Christians, might be received.⁸²

Therefore, *no man receives an angel unawares*⁸³ - despite Hebrews 12:3. Godly men always know when an angel appears before them. Only non-Godly people would fail to recognise an angel, yet angels would not consort with such people:

... by reason of excess and drunkenness; by reason of scurril and licentious discourse; by reason of wanton and unchaste provocations;

⁸⁰ c.f. Aquinas: S.T. 1a:LVII:4

⁸¹ II:210

⁸² II:211

⁸³ II:212

by reason of execrable and blasphemous oaths these angels of God cannot be present.⁸⁴

It worth noting that it is a circular argument where angels can only be seen by Godly people, but they only appear to Godly people in the first place. From here Donne exhorts men to treat all Christians and *poor ones of Christ* as if they were angels, since this is the *entertainment of angels*.⁸⁵ Going further:

God appeared by angels in the Old Testament, and he appears by angels in the New, in his messengers, in his ministers, in his servants.⁸⁶

Hospitality should not only be given since one thinks it could be an angel, but since humans, especially Church ministers, also count as angels, one should give hospitality on this count too. This comment suggests that Donne saw a true parallel between angelic and Church ministry, and perhaps is an indication that the Church had superseded, but not replaced, angelic ministry.

In this light he moves on to the implications of three figures for Trinitarian thought. He states that most Fathers took it as read that one of the figures was Christ, since Abraham addressed one of them as Lord. He also says that Scripture does not always use *angel* consistently in the sense of angelic spiritual being - for example, John and Malachi are called angels, and Christ is called the Angel of Counsel. So what was the

⁸⁴ II:212

⁸⁵ II:212 my italics.

⁸⁶ II:213 c.f. II:130

case here? Hilary says that Abraham perceived it to be Christ immediately, but Donne asks: "*Does Scripture actually say that Christ appeared before His incarnation?*"⁸⁷ Were all three angels, or only two, the other being Christ? Donne rehearses a number of Patristic arguments for and against, and finally says:

Even in these three glorious angels of God, there was an eminent difference; one of them seemed to Abraham to be the principal man in the commission, and to that one, he addressed himself. Amongst the other angels which are the ministers in God's church, one may have better abilities, better faculties than another, and it is no error, no weakness in man to desire to confer with one rather than another, or to hear one rather than another. But Abraham did not so apply himself to one of the three, that he neglected the other two. ... (Yet) something Abraham saw in this angel above the rest, which drew him, which Moses does not express; something a man finds in one preacher above another, which he cannot express, and he may very lawfully make his spiritual benefit of that, so that that be no occasion of neglecting due respects to others.⁸⁸

His point is that if one of the angels was truly Christ, then he would have totally ignored the other two angels, but he did not. Angels have differing skills, abilities and levels of attraction, as do humans; therefore *they were in truth no other than angels, there remains, for the shutting up of this part.*⁸⁹

⁸⁷ II:213

⁸⁸ II:214

⁸⁹ II:214 c.f. p226

Conclusion.

One of the most distinctive features of Donne's thought, when compared with those who preceded him, is the lack of warnings about angels. The classic text used against Rome, Galatians 1:8, was never employed in this way by Donne, and was used only to say that it was intrinsically impossible for an angel to lie anyway.⁹⁰ Elsewhere, men are told to think beyond the angels to God,⁹¹ and that one must not rely on the prayers of angels, even though they are ministering spirits – a point that does not say that angels are not intercessors, just that men should not rely on it.⁹² This very positive attitude is clear, as Donne has no fear investigating issues previously thought not worth pursuing. He was confident enough to discuss and investigate questions, and pose probable answers, but never be dogmatic about it (e.g. angelic creation and Guardian Angels). His Catholic past is obvious, but it is non-dogmatically asserted and the principle of *adiaphora* implicitly underpins whole approach.

However, the omissions from his thought are interesting, such as angelic mediation in the context of angels interceding for men, and men specifically invoking angelic ministry, since they are the areas which impinge directly on the core of the Protestant tenet of a non-mediated faith. While he does envisage an active ministry, it is one that it completely driven by God within the context of His providence, and not by men asking for or expecting it. This was a line that Donne would not cross – however, William Forbes would, and it is to him we now turn.

⁹⁰ II:73 c.f. I:314, 338

⁹¹ III:237

⁹² I:219

(2) WILLIAM FORBES (1585-1634)

Bishop of Edinburgh.

Introduction.

William Forbes, one of the Aberdeen Doctors, was a strong High Churchman, who, with others, was keen on reconciliation with Rome,⁹³ and zealous for episcopacy.⁹⁴ Forbes' desire for reconciliation with Rome led him to move further than many of his contemporaries in the direction of Continental Catholicism,⁹⁵ and as such he developed a reconciling theological method that was very much his own.⁹⁶ The central issues of this methodology will become apparent as we move through this section.

Forbes discusses angels in his treatise *Considerationes Modestoe Pacificae* (1625), which, while critical of Rome, looks for common ground with them, while also refuting Catholic claims that the Church of England was Calvinist. The treatise has sections dealing with Justification, Purgatory, the Intercession and Invocation of Saints and Angels, Christ the Mediator, and the Eucharist. The discussion around Saints and Angels is found in two chapters – the first dealing with whether angels intercede (*A Consideration of the Modern Controversy concerning the Intercession of Angels and Saints*), and the second, *Of the Invocation of Saints and Angels*, discussing whether men should invoke them or not. These chapters are then subdivided into further sections.

⁹³ Milton pp.40, 171, 217, 246, 250-1: Bishop Richard Montagu was especially keen on reconciliation.

⁹⁴ ODCC p.622; Introduction to Forbes' Works – see bibliography for details..

⁹⁵ Milton p. 203

⁹⁶ A. M. Allchin *The Dynamic Of Tradition* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1981) pp. 64-5

As noted before, there was a reluctance to engage with the issue of angelic prayer and mediation, due to the Protestant rejection of a mediated faith as exemplified by the Cultus. For example, Hooker was tentative about the issue, Salkeld, despite a full and developed scholastic angelology, pointedly never addressed this area, and Andrewes was clearly uncomfortable with any kind of angelic role in prayer and mediation. Donne too discussed many areas, including Guardian Angels and an interactive angelic ministry, but was careful to subordinate this to the Church, so angels had an inferior ministry which supported the superior ministry of Godly men in the Church. He also never talked of mediation. It appears that the prevailing theological culture of the time felt that angelic mediation and intercession was the final step before one took on fully the doctrines of Rome and its Cultus. While one could, for example, discuss the creation and fall of the angels, hierarchies and groupings, their nature and knowledge, and their ministry and relationship to the Church, and pronounce varying degrees of acceptance, none of these actually impinge on the mechanics of the Protestant faith which focused on direct and non-mediated faith in Christ. The importance of Forbes is not only that he addressed this in a head-on fashion, but that he arrived at an answer, using sources as varied as the Fathers, Scholastic Divines, and contemporary Protestant and Catholic thinkers, that essentially advocated the invocation of, and mediation of, angels. Forbes saw in this range of writers and traditions the seed for reconciliation, and this breadth of sources made him that true agreement could be made across theological boundaries.

As writers such as Milton note very well, ⁹⁷ a few other High Churchmen of his day did give ground to Rome on this. For example, Bishop Montagu (1574-1641) who agreed saints did pray for men on earth, yet saw the Cultus as *idle and foolish, but not impious or blasphemous*, ⁹⁸ and Richard Field (d. 1616) who too said that the *saints do pray for us*, yet was critical of their invocation by the Catholic Cultus. ⁹⁹ However, they mainly discussed the Cultus with regard to the invocation of the saints and not specifically angels – although the two are closely linked. What is interesting is that Forbes seems to be the only one of the period to systematically expound the area, and not only with regard the saints, but with regard angels too. It is also very interesting that while this treatise was written around 1625, and Forbes died in 1634, it wasn't published until 1658.

There are a number of areas that need to be highlighted to help understanding of the piece. Forbes's method is to cite as many sources as possible, quote them extensively, and then analyse what was said. His sources are too many to reference, so only the most important and interesting will be quoted. Second, is that his essential approach is to make the entire area an issue of adiaphora, and linked to this is the third point, that he viewed Romish abuses of the area as the problem, not the area itself. For example, Milton makes the point that Forbes *insisted that transubstantiation was essentially a superfluous opinion: an error and a falsehood, but one not contrary to real articles of faith*. ¹⁰⁰ Thus one of the main abuses was Rome dogmatically enforcing a belief. Forbes saw that certain beliefs could wrong, but could be over looked; or they

⁹⁷ Milton p.206-9

⁹⁸ Milton p.207

⁹⁹ Archbishop's Commission On Christian Doctrine *Prayer And The Departed* (London: SPCK, 1971) p. 75

¹⁰⁰ Ibid p.203

could be good and positive, but not required, and so be *adiaphora*. This approach is prevalent in his angelology. Also, and crucially for his method, this heavy use of *adiaphora* was based on a keen desire to find common ground with Rome and have reconciliation with them. As such he was looking from the outset, not to condemn the Cultus but to understand it; to agree with it where he could; and minimise the differences where he did not. Lastly, Forbes' argument is a rolling argument where he inches his way towards his goal, often being ambiguous as to what position he himself holds to, as opposed to clearly stating it at the beginning. It also needs to be noted that I have referenced only those quotes which deal directly with angels. Those which address the issues with saints I have moved briefly over.

(A) The Intercession of Angels and Saints.

The chapter *A Consideration of the Modern Controversy concerning the Intercession of Angels and Saints* starts with the question whether Angels pray for men. Forbes writes:

The more learned Protestants ¹⁰¹ do not deny that all the angels in general, and those who in particular cause and necessities have the charge of us, specially, pray for us: nor that our prayers are by these angels to God: understanding namely a mere ministerial oblation of

¹⁰¹ Forbes seems to mean by *learned Protestants* those who are not radical anti-episcopalian Puritans who take *sola Scripture* to the extreme that rejected Christian tradition. This radical group he terms *rigid Protestants*.

our prayers, but not such as is propitiatory; for this belongs only to Christ our sole mediator.¹⁰²

His first citation is Vasquez, a Spanish Jesuit scholastic, who said one had a Godly duty to believe this, supported by quotes from Peter Martyr, the Augsburg Confession, plus the Scriptures including, interestingly, Tobit 12:12. Then, after looking at the difference between an oblatory and propitiatory prayer,¹⁰³ Forbes asks which type of prayer an angel would make. Some Protestants would say that if the angel involved was the Angel of the Lord – i.e. was actually Christ in angelic form - a propitiatory prayer is possible, because it is actually Christ. However, most Catholics maintained that when Scripture says it is *angel* praying, it means *angel* not Christ, and angels in themselves cannot not pray propitiatory prayers, only oblatory prayers. Forbes then writes:

(Some) leave the reader free to adopt either opinion. But these words of Estius should be observed, *But from the fact that angels offer our prayers to God, it follows naturally, that they pray for us. For they cannot otherwise be understood to offer our prayers to God, than by commending them, that God would deign to accept and hear them. But this is to add their prayers to ours, and by their prayers assist ours.*¹⁰⁴

Beza also *understood it of an angel (not Christ) and affirms that the prayers of the saints of this world, of those who daily offer to God*

¹⁰² Works of Forbes (LACT) II:143

¹⁰³ In simple terms, a propitiatory prayer is that which removes sin and is for the cleansing of the soul. An oblatory prayer is a prayer offered to God for the service and upholding of the church – a prayer for assistance and help, not salvation and cleansing from sin.

*those pure sacrifices of prayers and well-doing, are offered to God by the ministry of angels.*¹⁰⁵

Therefore, Forbes supports the idea that angels support men's prayers with their own in an oblatory fashion - not propitiatorily. Forbes's summation of his argument is a good example of his sources:

On this whole subject, read a remarkable passage in Augustine (de Trin. 15); see also his 121st Epistle, St. Bernard's 7th Sermon on the Song, and others. Consult also Nicolaus Serarius, the Jesuit, discussing this subject at much length. Certainly, the more rigid Protestants fight with a very feeble argument, not merely against the Canonical authority of (Tobit), which we assuredly do not think be ascribed to it, but even against the truth of many things which are contained in it, amongst other things, because the angel is said to offer to God prayers of the saints.¹⁰⁶

Forbes uses not only Patristic, mediaeval and contemporary Catholic sources authoritatively, he also makes the point of defending the truth of the Book of Tobit – which has a key text on this issue. Thus, based on the Bible, Tobit and tradition, for Forbes, angels truly do intercede for men, and from here he moves onto the subject of Guardian Angels:

¹⁰⁴ II:147

¹⁰⁵ II:147

¹⁰⁶ II:149

To each believer at least, there is ordinarily some certain angel assigned as guard and keeper (although on special occasions, several are also at times sent to him of God's good pleasure for the sake of consolation) to *procure his salvation*, either by prayers or even by actions, according as circumstances admit or require, many learned Protestants *think probable, though not of faith*; against this opinion of others more rigid, to whom this seems either a false imagination or at least altogether uncertain. ¹⁰⁷

Interestingly, Forbes presupposes the previous answer of angels praying for men, which is the first indication that his is a rolling argument. We also see his argument where probability does not equal uncertainty and thus exclusion, as *rigid Protestants* would have said. He advocates an angelic ministry that helps men to *procure salvation*, and to defend this, Forbes gives a number of Biblical citations, since it *seems entirely to be proved by many passages of Scripture*. ¹⁰⁸ He then starts to quote other writers, one of whom claimed that *all the Fathers seem to have been of this opinion*. Forbes also cites contemporary writers who believed in them, including John Salkeld:

... an Englishman (who) proves this much at length from the Fathers both Greek and Latin. Consult the treatise itself, written and printed in London in the year 1613 by the author, having left the Romanists, he had joined himself to the Protestants. ¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Forbes II:149 (my italics)

¹⁰⁸ Mt. 18:10; Acts 12:15; Gen. 48:16

¹⁰⁹ II:151 – c.f. Salkeld: Chpt. 44-45

Forbes ends the discussion of Guardian Angels saying:

It is not necessary to cite more in a matter so plain. Romanists themselves do not affirm that this is a matter of faith, but that this assertion, though it is not expressed in Scripture, nor defined by the Church, yet is received with so great a consent by the universal Church, and has so much foundation in Scripture, as interpreted by the Fathers, that it cannot be denied without the utmost rashness, and almost error.¹¹⁰

Clearly, Forbes sees the existence of Guardian Angels as plain, despite neither Scripture nor the Church clearly teaching or defining it. We also see the idea that while it is not a matter of faith, the whole weight of his argument says that it is true and to be believed nonetheless. This is the first of many times that Forbes appeals to a principle of *adiaphora* (implicitly or explicitly) during this treatise.

Next Forbes looks at Guardian Angels of nations, and says that *certain angels are ordinarily set over each country; but that on several occasion several others also are sent to them*, and that Scripture and the Fathers confirm this,¹¹¹ before returning to Guardian Angels to ask whether:

¹¹⁰ II:151-3 – Quoting the scholastic Jesuit, Suarez (d.1617)

¹¹¹ II:153

... the Guardian Angel does not wholly desert his charge, so long as this life lasts, although he sins and multiplies his sins, many learned Romanists teach to be probable; and many moderate Protestants do not gainsay it. ¹¹²

Interestingly here, Catholics have become the *learned* ones, and it is the *moderate* Protestants who agree with them. Forbes states that *others also agree who think this thing probable and most conformable to Scripture and the testimony of many Fathers*. However, his sources are split, with Forbes admitting that Basil, Origen and Bernard say angels can be driven away by sin. Forbes concludes that it is probable that angels can be driven away, since angels always behold the face of God so they can't always be turned to men. However, this is not demanded by faith.

Forbes now moves on to angelic knowledge, and follows a similar line to Donne:

It is a matter beyond controversy that whatever things are done and said by whose keeping they are appointed, are seen and observed by the Guardian Angel when they are present; and that they are always present is probable, though not of faith. But that those thoughts, desires and affections which are within us, can by no means be known by the angels, unless they manifest themselves by outward affections or signs, or are revealed by God, Protestants assert rightly and agreeably to the sacred writings (I Cor. 2:11; I Kings 8:39), and to the

¹¹² II:153

teaching of the Fathers. To this opinion all the sound Romanists subscribe.¹¹³

He quotes Saurez, a *sound Romanist*, who, after examining the Fathers, allows difference of opinion, and Forbes himself, following this says that nobody without Scripture could even start to tackle this question:

Who without divine revelation would venture to affirm that our thoughts are always revealed by God even to our Guardian angels, much less to all others?

He rebukes those who use the passage where angels are said to rejoice over the repentance of a sinner, to say that this demonstrates that Guardian Angels know the thoughts of their charges, because we do not know if the angels learn of the conversion from God, whether they simply observed it, or whether they could see inside the man's heart. One could not assert this *without a considerable degree of rashness*.¹¹⁴

Finally, Forbes deals with the intercession of the saints, but still mentions angels. First, he rejects the idea that since the saints departed become like the angels, they have the same ability to intercede as angels do.¹¹⁵ Forbes quotes Augustine saying that:

The dead may also hear somewhat from the angels, who are present at the things which are done here, viz. what He to Whom all things are

¹¹³ II:155 c.f. Donne I:182

¹¹⁴ II:157

¹¹⁵ II:163-5

subject judges that any one of them ought to hear ... How modest and prudent are these words of Augustine.¹¹⁶

So, Forbes concludes that angels may be able converse with the departed. Forbes is clear that angels know men's affairs, and so saints probably know men's prayers through either God or angels telling them.¹¹⁷ Augustine supported this saying that *whoever of angels or men abideth in God, and can feel human prayers in Him, he hears me* (i.e. Augustine himself).¹¹⁸ Around this whole area, Forbes says that:

Probable conjectures may be brought, but nothing is certain, but sober Christian piety can avoid useless questions of faith.¹¹⁹

The force of his argument is to say that Christian piety *can* find a way through this maze of questions, avoid useless questions, and discover the truth – the divergence from a Calvinist approach is striking. Here the chapter ends.

(B) The Invocation of Angels and Saints.

Section I of the next chapter, *Of The Invocation of Saints and Angels*, begins by claiming that even though the Council of Trent may appear to demand the invocation of saints, but it doesn't really, since:

¹¹⁶ II:171 Citing: Care of the Dead 15

¹¹⁷ II:171-175

¹¹⁸ II:173 Citing: Vera Fide 55

¹¹⁹ II:185

*It is good and useful to invoke them suppliantly, (so) we, following a charitable judgement, think that this invocation did not appear absolutely necessary.*¹²⁰

Trent's position on this was defined in the 25th session (1563) in the decree *On The Invocation, Veneration, and Relics of Saints, and on Sacred Images* – it is worth noting that it actually does not mention angels, but implicitly as a part of the Cultus, they would come under this heading.¹²¹ From this decree it is clear that to reject practice and theology of invocation is condemned completely, and that bishops and priests are to instruct the faithful in this, as well as to remove superstitious practices. However, at no point is invocation specifically demanded of the faithful, nor is it said to be necessary, yet the consistent stance of its profitability would implicitly suggest it is what any good Catholic would do anyway, and not to would be a lack in their Faith. Therefore, while Forbes is right to say that it is not explicitly made necessary nor demanded, Trent strongly points in that direction.

This is also confirmed by contemporary Catholics such as Bellarmine, who wrote that *both holy angels and the saints are piously and profitably invoked by the living*, and backed it up using St. Ambrose.¹²² Two pages of other examples are put forth by Forbes including contemporary writers, and Andrewes's replies to both Bellarmine and Perron, which confirm that Rome teaches it is not necessary, but it is helpful to invoke angels and saints, and concluded with:

¹²⁰ II:187

¹²¹ Trans. H.J. Schroeder *The Canons and Decrees Of The Council Of Trent* (Tan Books and Publishers Inc, 1978) pp.215-7

And let so much be said out of Romanists themselves about the non-necessity of the invocation of saints and Angels. ¹²³

The title of Section II of the chapter strangely does not show the direction of Forbes' thought - *In which it is proved that their religious invocation, or prayer to them in the strict meaning of the word, is unlawful* - yet the word *strict* in the title does suggest that he is leaving a door open – as will become clear. Quoting Bellarmine and Serarius, Forbes highlights the common Catholic distinction of *latria* and *dulia*, but rejects it as unScriptural and unPatristic - all prayer and invocation is *latria*, and for God alone:

Yet that religious adoration, by whatever name it is called, whether *latria* or *dulia*, and every act and duty of it alike, is due to God alone, both Scripture and the Fathers most clearly teach, as Protestants have copiously proved. ¹²⁴

Numerous sources, ancient and modern, Catholic and Protestant, are cited to show that this is a *New Theology* and that *God alone is to be worshipped and adored by prayer or religious invocation*.

The Fathers always define prayer by a direct and express relation to God and none beside. ... It might be proved by numberless passages

¹²² II:189

¹²³ II:193

¹²⁴ II:195

from the Fathers, that God alone is to be worshipped and adored by prayer or religious invocation.¹²⁵

Forbes builds on this by condemning the direct worship of angels, and through a whole range of writers and thinkers,¹²⁶ proves conclusively that, *in the strict meaning of the word* the prayer and invocation of angels is unlawful. Finishing the discussion (for now, at least), and using Andrewes, Forbes says that men are not too sinful to present prayers to God, and thus doesn't need angels to do it for them. Men can arrive at Christ directly without angels, and anyway, no creature is to be invoked by men.¹²⁷

In Section III, the *strictness* mentioned above is defined, thus the title *In which it is proved that the mere invocation or addressing of Angels and saints, to pray to God with us and for us, is not to be condemned either as unlawful and useless*. He begins by writing:

The bare addressing of Angels and saints, whereby they are admonished and invited, that they should pray to God with us and for us, in the same way that we ask good persons during their life-time that they should intercede with God for us, join their prayers to ours, and make our salvation a continual object of them - we Protestants, who love to speak rather more cautiously and distinctly than do many others, term a calling unto rather than a calling upon: for Protestants in

¹²⁵ II:199

¹²⁶ He cites Tertullian, Irenaeus, Origen, Athanasius, Ambrose, Chrysostom, Basil, Augustine, Jerome plus canons from various early church councils.

¹²⁷ II:203-5

general can scarcely bear to hear the word invocation, employed with regard to the saints.

He continues:

Invocation is nowhere in Scripture (but) *advocation* or a *calling unto* is preferred by ... J. Ussher, Archbishop of Armagh. ... In a wide meaning of the word, there is nothing to hinder its being called invocation.¹²⁸

This subtle but crucial redefinition is not instantly built upon, and Forbes accepts that there:

... exists no command in Scripture, nor even a sufficient and formal example of this or of any other sort whatever of *advocation* or addressing of Angels or saints (especially of the latter).¹²⁹

Forbes then piles citation upon citation to demonstrate this,¹³⁰ yet his qualification of the absence of proof *especially* with regard to the saints, as opposed to angels, is significant. Forbes' citations focus upon the rejection of invoking the saints alone, and he finishes with a sweeping condemnation:

With what conscience, therefore, can Bellarmine along with other Romanists endeavour to prove the invocation of saints? ... Certainly,

¹²⁸ II:213 – Ussher's angelology and his views on angelic invocation will be discussed later.

¹²⁹ II:213

¹³⁰ II:213-217

no passage whatever of the Scriptures either of the Old or of the New Testaments is wont to be brought forward by the Romanists in support of the invocation of saints. ¹³¹

Previous subtly of definition now moves to the fore:

But there are two passages of Scripture which may seem to favour *in no small degree* the advocacy or addressing of the Angels: and of which therefore we must say something. ¹³²

The first is Genesis 48:16, which Catholics claimed as explicit proof of angelic invocation, but Protestants had developed a series of refutations, which Forbes rehearses. Some claim the angel is Christ, citing Isaiah 9 and Malachi 3, where He is called an angel, and some Fathers also read it that way - Novatian, Athanasius and Chrysostom amongst them. Yet other Fathers did see it as a created angel, and interestingly enough Chrysostom (contradicting himself) is one of these, alongside Basil. Chrysostom isn't the only one Forbes highlights as being inconsistent on this point - John Calvin himself also called this angel Christ in one work, and an angel in another. Another way of refuting Catholic claims was to *rightly (say) that in this passage there is no direct and formal invocation or addressing of an Angel.* ¹³³ - it is merely Jacob desiring that an angel would come and guard his sons - an *earnest petition for Angelic guardianship*. Forbes seems more convinced by this argument, but does not clearly commit himself to it, and after citing a number of Catholic sources where informal invocation is supported, he cites the Catholic Cassander, saying:

¹³¹ II:217

¹³² II:219 (My italics.)

(Regarding the Catholic Litany) *All ye saints of God, pray for us*, was to be thus understood. Would that all the saints would pray to God for me ... Who, when he prays to God, does not desire that all good persons in heaven and in earth, should join their prayers to his? Archbishop of Spalatro says that *This invocation is rather that of a wish and a desire, than of an actual speaking to them*.

Forbes gives no criticism of this quote, and the implication is that he supports the sentiment behind the passage. The other passage raised to support angelic invocation is Revelation 1:4 (*the seven spirits which are before His throne*) - these seven spirits being angels which can be invoked. Protestant objections are numerous. People are cited (including Aquinas) who say these seven spirits are the seven-fold gifts of the Holy Ghost, and Alcasar the Jesuit writes that *Sound theology does not allow of our asking Gospel grace and peace from Angels*.¹³⁴ However, others say that the seven spirits are angels, *who are before God, not as equals to Him, but as ministering to Him*, and many, including Beza, agree with this view. Forbes now uses this to again raise a defence for Tobit - since it teaches that there are seven archangels who minister before the throne of God and this proves *how weak an argument the more rigid Protestants use against the truth of the Book of Tobit on account of the seven Angels*.¹³⁵ This sways Forbes to a more positive line, and, using his sympathy for the idea of Guardian Angels, he concludes the discussion thus:

¹³³ II:219

¹³⁴ II:223

¹³⁵ II:225 c.f. Tobit 12:25

According, therefore, to the opinion of these divines, although St. John in the same oblique words asks for grace and peace from God, and from Christ, and from these seven spirits, yet as regards God and Christ he used a religious invocation, while as regards the seven spirits, *he has expressed the wish and earnest longing of his heart wherewith he desires grace and peace from them as from ministering spirits who have charge over us in matters of this nature.* Here, therefore, we may again see a wish, not a formal and direct invocation or addressing of Angels.¹³⁶

This might been seen as the end of the argument, but Forbes moves on and develops his position in a more positive direction, as I implied earlier:¹³⁷

But yet, we are not on this account to reject as unlawful (as Protestants now commonly contend) the addressing of Angels and saints, that with us and for us they should pray to God for us, inspite of the fact, that neither any command nor any formal example of this thing is able to be found in Scripture.

Seemingly, the absence of a Biblical defence for the practice shouldn't be immediately taken as a prohibition. Those who take this line were wrong to do so, such as Andrewes, and Forbes clearly rejects him by saying that *Bishop Andrewes of Ely, a man in other respects most learned, is carried so far to accept this precept.*¹³⁸

¹³⁶ II:225 (my italics)

¹³⁷ See above p.321

¹³⁸ II:225

The precept being that if it is not clear in Scripture, then we should not do it. Andrewes's actual argument is that while Scripture says saints can hear men from heaven, it does not say they should be invoked. Those against Andrewes' position are piled up, their basic argument being that the lack of explicit Biblical support does not equal the need to reject it. This is summed up by Forbes, who asserts that:

Not even the Romanists themselves, those at least who are more learned and moderate among them, put any substantial part of divine worship [as invocation of angels], since (as we proved above) they do not think that it is absolutely necessary, but a rite merely that is of its own nature indifferent (adiaphora), lawful, nay even pious and useful.¹³⁹

In other words, invocation does not imply worship, and while it is not necessary and enforced, it is deemed acceptable and helpful, and to this end Forbes makes the claim that:

The Church of England herself retains and practices to the present day, many rites received from the Fathers as lawful and pious, of which you cannot find either any precept or any example in Holy Scripture; as the sign of the cross on the forehead of the baptised, kneeling at receiving the Eucharist ... inspite of the reclamations of the

¹³⁹ II:229

Puritans continually objecting to the precept *Ye shall not add to that which I command you.*¹⁴⁰

Here for the first time we see the idea of *adiaphora* being explicitly applied to the invocation of angels:

When a thing is merely indifferent (*adiaphora*), it is enough if it not be repugnant to Holy Scriptures but is agreeable to it.¹⁴¹

Yet is a simple appeal to the idea of *adiaphora* enough? It seems not to Forbes, and he looks to underpin it with an argument from history and tradition. However, he is immediately struck with a difficulty - that among the pre-Nicene Fathers *we read nothing from which the invocation or direct addressing of prayers of either Angels or saints can be certainly and perspicuously proved.*¹⁴² Bellarmine's attempts to prove this using Dionysius, Irenaeus and Athanasius, are refuted over the next few pages, and Forbes concludes with a scathing attack on Cardinal Perron accusing him of ignorance of the Fathers and hypocrisy, while commenting that Bellarmine's defences are *unworthy of a man of so much learning and so high a reputation.*¹⁴³ Bizarrely, after conclusively proving the absence of the practice before AD 325 Forbes then writes:

But yet, we are not on this ground to reject or condemn that addressing the Angels or saints in our prayers, of which we have been

¹⁴⁰ II:229

¹⁴¹ II:229-231

¹⁴² II:231

speaking. For it is well known that many lawful and useful rites were brought into the Church by the Fathers and Councils of subsequent centuries, especially of the fourth and fifth, of which we do not read anything in the writers of the previous centuries. For the Church of the fourth century had the same right to institute lawful and useful ceremonies as the three before it. No one in his senses will deny this.¹⁴⁴

For many not rooted in the Patristic Revival, this is a strange and unguarded argument, since if the 4th or 5th centuries could institute practices absent from earlier centuries, why couldn't later centuries do the same? Not only would those Protestants who argued *sola scriptura* reject this, but even those who had a high regard for the Patristic witness would feel uncomfortable with it, since there is no guarantee of continuity of thought from earlier centuries, nor, ultimately, from the Bible. The crucial issue for theologians was the continuity from the Bible through the centuries, and Forbes circumvents this.

However one can see why he would circumvent it. Forbes, along with others from within the broad Patristic revival would have held to a similar scheme as Andrewes – the inherent authority of the first five centuries of the Fathers.¹⁴⁵ *Rigid Protestants* had clearly demonstrated the lack of evidence in the first 300 years for invocation, but since authority rested in the combined witness of the first 500 years, then Forbes is trying to find common ground by saying the last 200 years had the authority of the

¹⁴³ II:237

¹⁴⁴ II:239

¹⁴⁵ See above pp.255ff

first 300 years, and thus even though there was no discernible continuity for the first 300 years, the last 200 years had the right to develop doctrine in this way. Therefore, the development was legitimate, and this gives ground from which discussion with Rome can then flow.

From this premise, Forbes quotes, mainly from fourth-century Fathers, that saints were invoked,¹⁴⁶ as well as Andrewes' *Against Perron* saying Andrewes was wrong to take his line against invocation. Occasionally, it almost appears that Forbes is making an extended attack on Andrewes himself. For example, he authoritatively quotes Chrysostom, saying that since he did not condemn it, he must have supported the practice - this in defiance of Andrewes who says that Chrysostom's silence demonstrated a lack of support.¹⁴⁷ Again, he quotes Ambrose who said that *angels are to be entreated who are given us as guardians*, and then gives Andrewes' explanation of the passage. Andrewes tries to suggest that Ambrose wrote this when he was young and inexperienced. Forbes retorts:

But certainly it by no means is evident from those things which (Andrewes) finds fault with, that he was then such a stranger to theology, as to be ignorant almost of its very elements.¹⁴⁸

And Andrewes' other Ambrose quote (an older and wiser Ambrose) to prove this, is equally dismissed. Ambrose wrote that *to obtain favours from God ... there is no*

¹⁴⁶ II:239-245 e.g. Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa, John Chrysostom.

¹⁴⁷ II:245

¹⁴⁸ II:247

need for a suffragan ¹⁴⁹ - thus, said Andrewes, no suffragan means no angels either. Forbes counters this by saying that while a suffragan is not needed, this does not mean it is excluded. Forbes continues against Andrewes' comment that Ambrose stated that *Thou alone, Lord, art to be invoked*, again saying that this *makes nothing against the human and civil invocation of the saints*. ¹⁵⁰ This is another unguarded argument, which essentially says that since a position is not clearly and explicitly excluded, then it is reasonable to assume that it could be included and legitimate.

Section IV (*The same opinion proved still further*) begins with another rejection of Andrewes, and a refutation of a classic Augustinian text against invocation. Andrewes wrote that while a number of passages in Augustine might be understood as supporting invocation, one in the City of God *dries up like the sun all others*:

At which sacrifice the martyrs are named in their own place and order,
as men of God who in His confession have overcome the world: but
they are not invoked by the priest who is sacrificing. ¹⁵¹

If, Andrewes claimed, the priest does not do it, why think or suppose that the people do it either? And if not at the Mass, why at any other time? However, Forbes replies that Catholics have a good point when they say that *the passage cited is speaking of invocation in the Liturgy and at the altar, where since a sacrifice is truly offered to God ... the invocation is to be directed to God alone*, and he demonstrates that Andrewes took the passage out of context. Forbes also demonstrates

¹⁴⁹ II:249

¹⁵⁰ II:249

¹⁵¹ II:253 – Aug.: De Civ. XXII

that it is traditional that saints are not invoked during certain parts of the Liturgy, so this is quite an understandable comment. Augustine did not disapprove of invocation, whatever Andrewes may try to prove, ¹⁵² and Forbes quotes Augustine to that effect:

God Almighty Who is everywhere present ... hearing the prayers of the martyrs, bestows by means of angelic ministries which are spread everywhere, those consolations to such men as He judges proper to receive them. ¹⁵³

Yet some, conceding this, said that Augustine affirms the invocation of martyrs, but not angels or other saints. Forbes rejects this as a clever thought, but inconsistent with the wider evidence, and they are *wrong in denying that the invocation of Angels as well as other saints not martyrs was approved by pious antiquity, as is most clearly evident from what has already been said.* ¹⁵⁴ This pious antiquity, starting from the Cappadocian Fathers, is then described in some detail, with admonishments throughout to take seriously the weight of tradition, ¹⁵⁵ right through the centuries until Forbes reaches Martin Luther, and quotes one of Luther's earliest writings (c. 1518) on preparing for death which says:

¹⁵² II:255-7

¹⁵³ II:259-261 – no specific Augustine reference given.

¹⁵⁴ II:263

¹⁵⁵ Quoting Augustine, Basil, Gregory Nazianzus, Gregory the Great, Jerome and various Litanies from both Eastern and Western churches.

When he is at the point of death, let him not cease to invoke the Blessed Virgin Mary, his Guardian Angel, the Apostle he has chosen and other saints ... to intercede with the Lord for him. ¹⁵⁶

Similar quotes from other Reformation figures such as Oecclampadius, Bucer, and Catholic apologists are brought forward saying that invocation is an acceptable practice, which brings Forbes up to the present. First he quotes Francis White (Bishop of Carlisle, Norwich, and then Ely between 1626 and 1638) who disputed with Fisher the Jesuit, and took a subtle line:

(It was) granted there (is) a certain way of supplicating or addressing the saints and angels, that they should pray together with us ... (The) practice of the ancients in this matter ought not to be condemned, yet their invocation according to the practice of the Roman Church must not be approved. ¹⁵⁷

Basically, invocation is acceptable so long as it wasn't performed as Rome did it, and the abuses he bases this on are the mis-definition and misunderstanding of invocation; that saints and angels actually have power to change things; excess and superstition; a misunderstanding of the meaning of mediation; and the implication that Christ is not the only true mediator. ¹⁵⁸ Also quoted was Bishop Montague who once preached to James I on Psalm 50:15 - *call on me in the day of trouble* - where Montagu condemned angelic invocation, and yet, in line with Forbes' thought then conceded that, due to the

¹⁵⁶ II:267

¹⁵⁷ II:277

¹⁵⁸ c.f. II:281ff

weight of tradition, Guardian Angels probably existed, and that it was acceptable to pray *Holy Guardian Angel, pray for me*. This led Montague into a position where held a similar position to Forbes - that angelic invocation was adiaphora.¹⁵⁹

This is now the cue for Forbes to start to argue with much more potency the case for angelic invocation to be adiaphora:

Let us hear the judgement of Divines who were moderate and especially anxious for peace in the church.¹⁶⁰

Conciliatory quotes from contemporary writers are again piled one upon another, including a reference to Henry VIII's *Necessary Doctrine* of 1544, and Forbes ends this section of the chapter wanting the reader to be tolerant and broad minded on these pious practices, and pleading against schism on the issue.

Section V deals with what Forbes perceives as Rome's abuses, and he goes back over old ground to reinforce his previously made points. After clarifying what is abuse and what is not, Forbes' concludes these two chapters on invocation:

Let God alone be religiously adored: let Him alone be prayed to, through Christ, Who is the sole and only mediator, truly and properly speaking, between God and men. Let not the very ancient custom received by the universal church, as well as Greek and Latin, of addressing Angels and saints after the manner we have mentioned,

¹⁵⁹ II:279

¹⁶⁰ II:281

be condemned or rejected as impious, nor even as vain and foolish, by the more rigid Protestants. Let the foul abuses and superstitions which have crept in be taken away. And so peace may thereafter easily be established and sanctioned between dissentient parties, as regards this controversy. Which may the God of peace and of all pious concord vouchsafe to grant for the sake of His only begotten Son.

GLORY TO GOD ALONE.¹⁶¹

In conclusion, Forbes has five main aspects to his thought that makes him stand apart from all his contemporaries. First, and driven by his desire for reconciliation with Rome, is Forbes' heavy and explicit reliance on adiaphora, which then allows him to apply the next four aspects – that Angelic intercession and Guardian Angels are not of faith, but it is rash to reject them; formal invocation is wrong, but informal advocacy is acceptable; as long as advocacy is not done *exactly* as Rome does it, then it is acceptable; and finally, the range of sources he used to underpin his argument was enormous and eclectic, and cleverly applied to serve his own ends – an end that said Protestants could find common ground with Rome on the issue of the Cultus. Just as Forbes approach was a development far beyond Donne, the next chapter will highlight how his angelology was also thoroughly out of step with the Calvinists within the Church of England.

¹⁶¹ II:313

Chapter 8

CALVINIST ANGELOLOGY IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND FROM 1610 TO 1640

Introduction.

One would expect that in reply to High Church angelology, Calvinists would respond with an angelology of their own, one that fitted their theological outlook and challenged the High Church approach. This, however, with the exception of Richard Sibbes, does not seem to be the case, and those who engaged in the subject seemed to feel that maintaining the essential Calvinist attitude was sufficient. For example, John Williams's devotional book *Three Small and Plain Treatises* (1620), is a practical exposition with no references to angels whatsoever,¹ and as already noted, Archbishop Abbot never made any mention of them in his writings.

The paucity of thinkers cited here appears to be for three broad reasons. First, is Calvinism's general disinterest in the area. Second, is that from the 1620s onwards many Calvinists had increasing problems with the leadership and theology of William Laud. Many of them either opted to resign their livings and leave the Church of England, or were deprived of their livings for non-conformity. Those who did not resign, bowed to Laud's restrictions, and only stayed with the Church by regarding Laud's demands as *adiaphora*, and thus as things that did not impinge on the central issues of the faith.² Thus the lack of Calvinist thinkers is partly due to the large number of resignations and deprivations of Calvinists who wanted freedom to minister

¹ Ed. B. Williams *The Works of John Williams* (The Sutton Courtney Press, 1980)

² T. Webster *Godly Clergy In Early Stuart England* (Cambridge University Press, 1997) p.58

as they saw fit. Finally, is that during the 1620s, Laud was restricting what clergy could preach on. As early as August 1622, James I sent his *Directions To Clergy* (largely written by Laud), which limited lectures and preaching (except by Bishops and Deans) on *the deep points of predestination, election, reprobation or of universality, efficacy, resistibility or irresistibility of God's grace.* ³ By 1628, these restrictions were thoroughly in force, ⁴ and from the late 1620s Laud was using visitations to ensure conformity, ⁵ causing many to leave the Church. This point is the cause of a distinctive feature of Anglican angelology of the time, since nobody discussed these issues, then neither did they discuss election or the nature of angelic confirmation. For example, Thomas Goodwin was a minister in the Church of England until he resigned in 1633, and went into exile in Holland. It was only when he returned as an independent 8 years later that he wrote his *Exposition on Ephesians*, where he did discuss, at length, these issues. ⁶ From within the orbit of the Church of England, nobody tackled the election of the angels, and the issues that were discussed were shaped by the limitations Laud placed upon the Church.

The outline of this section will be as follows. First I will look at Lewis Bayly and James Ussher, whose careers spanned the first half of the 17th century, and how they viewed angels as writers coming from before the Golden Age had really impacted on the church. I will then consider the thought of John Cosin, a High Churchman who challenged the Calvinists over the rôle angels played in their system, and finally

³ W. Gee & W.J. Hardy *Documents Illustrative of English Church History* (London: MacMillan 1986) pp.516-8 c.f. M.E. Dever *Richard Sibbes* (Mercer University Press, 2000) p.75

⁴ Kendal p.103

⁵ e.g. Webster p.88, 153, 205

⁶ Ed. J.C. Miller *The Works of Thomas Goodwin: Vol 1* (Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1866) pp.111-171

Richard Sibbes, one of the few Calvinists who remained in the Church of England in the 1620s and 1630s and discussed angels.

(1) Lewis Bayly (1573 - 1631)

Lewis Bayly, Bishop of Bangor (from 1611) was a man with Puritan sympathies, who approved of both Calvin and Beza, and was made James I's chaplain in 1616.⁷ *His Practice of Piety* was a Puritan classic of the period, going through dozens of editions,⁸ and his influence was wide. Although there is no definite date of writing, the third edition of the book was published in 1613, and some cite 1611 as a probable date of writing. In tune with his heritage and the times, Bayly demonstrates a predominantly practical approach to angels. *The Practice of Piety* is a series of prayers and devotions for daily use, which focuses on sin, repentance and living a holy life. His approach is usually plainly scriptural, and his method is clearly Calvinist. For example, Bayly talks of angelic protection, saying:

*(God) provides all things necessary for soul and body. ... God gives his holy angels as ministers, a charge to attend upon him always for his good. Yea, in danger, to pitch their tents about him for his safety, wherever he be. Yea, God's protection shall defend him as a cloud by day, and as a pillar of fire by night. And his providence shall hedge him from the power of the devil.*⁹

⁷ ODCC p.173 c.f. Webster pp.56-7

⁸ For example, 11 editions by 1619, and 72 by 1792.

⁹ L. Bayley *The Practice of Piety* (London: Daniel Midwinter, 1723) p.64 – (my italics) c.f. p.186

While he is wanting to state the truth of the protection and benefits provided by angels, here the angel that led the Israelites through the desert is primarily defined as God's protection. In a similar vein, Bayley exhorts men to be holy since they are in the sight of angels,¹⁰ and in a series of *Sabbath Meditations* for before taking communion, one should pray:

Give me grace to behave myself in the holy congregation with comeliness and reverence, as in thy presence, and in the sight of thy holy angels.¹¹

Again, in a *Morning Prayer for all the family* God is asked:

Grant us the custody of thy holy angels, to defend and direct us in all our ways.¹²

Defend and direct are terms with no real spiritual import, tending more towards physical custody of their charge.

In *A Meditation of the blessed state of a regenerate man at his death*, we see the comforting idea that angels protect the soul at death, but what is interesting is the teaching that angels are with men from birth – an idea that makes sense in the context of doctrine of election:

¹⁰ Practice of Piety p.158

¹¹ Cited I Cor 11:13; Ep 3:10; I Pt 1:12

And saying with Stephen, Lord Jesus receive my spirit. He no sooner yields up his sacred ghost, but immediately the holy angels who attend upon him from his birth unto his death, carry and accompany his soul to heaven ... which is the Kingdom of Heaven, whither only God, angels and good workers do accompany the soul. The one to deliver the charge, the other to receive the reward. ¹³

Bayley also talks of angelic assistance and the joining of men with angels in heaven, and this seems to be a pastoral point he wants to stress. ¹⁴ Thus Bayley's approach is practical, focused on good works and morality, and clearly avoids any specifics about angelology, preferring to cite an angelic ministry in the general context of God's wider providence – except, strangely, in death, perhaps to confirm that God will use His angels to bring the soul to Him. In contrast, Ussher focuses on that other Calvinist pre-occupation, refutation of Rome, as the basis for his discussions on angels.

¹² Practice of Piety p.198

¹³ Practice of Piety pp.66-7

¹⁴ Practice of Piety p.68 c.f. p.464

(2) James Ussher (1581 - 1656)

Ussher, Archbishop of Armagh, was an immensely well read and learned man, whose thought and theology was characterised by anti-Catholicism,¹⁵ anti-Arminianism,¹⁶ and a voracious reading of the Fathers.¹⁷ Of these, his anti-Catholicism is the primary feature of discussions around angels, and it is noticeable that his Patristic knowledge was never used for any development or investigations about angels. The distance in thought from Donne, and especially Forbes, is striking. However, while he maintained his Calvinist views in some areas, he still supported the Anglican episcopate as a valid expression of Christian ministry. As one who was trained during the period before the Golden Age, it is of little surprise that the main features of his thought were combating Rome and maintaining a broad Calvinist orthodoxy in the Church – thus he emphasises the rejection of angelic veneration and worship.

The Irish Articles, written by Ussher as the doctrinal standard for the Irish Church, were set forth in 1615, and they advocated a broadly Calvinist position,¹⁸ yet in line with the English 39 Articles.¹⁹ Of the 104 Articles, three deal directly with angels – Nos. 18-20. The section preceding this covers predestination, and makes clear that this system *offers no violence to the wills of reasonable creatures*²⁰ – angels

¹⁵ R. Buick Knox *James Ussher: Archbishop of Armagh* (University Press of Wales, 1967) pp.156-7

¹⁶ Tyacke p.49

¹⁷ Ussher was very well read in Origen, Augustine, Chrysostom, Jerome, and the Cappadocian Fathers, plus the decrees of Councils c.f. Buick Knox pp.99ff

¹⁸ Buick Knox pp.16-19

¹⁹ Buick Knox p.21

²⁰ Article 11

presumably included. In examining the next three Articles, one sees a classically Calvinist approach:

- Article 18 talks of how God *created all things, and afterwards by His providence continues, propagates and orders them according to His will.*
- Of which Article 19 says the *principal creatures are angels and men.*
- Article 20 adds a little detail saying that some angels *continued in that holy state wherein they were created, and are by God's grace forever established therein; others fell from the same, and are reserved in chains of darkness unto the judgement of the great day.*

Broadly, all these say is that God created angels, maintains their existence, and that some are established (confirmed) by God's grace and some are not. There is no other mention of angels anywhere in the 104 Articles, not even when discussing issues around providence. Thus for Ussher simply confirming their existence and establishment (in terms of election) is sufficient.

This attitude is clear throughout the rest of his writings, and is usually expressed in terms of anti-Catholicism. For example, around 1615 he stated that the angels of the churches in Revelation were not angels, but were bishops or church leaders,²¹ and in a

²¹ Ed. C.R. Elrington *The Works of James Ussher (Vol. I-XVIII)* (Dublin: Hodges, Smith & Nichol, 1877) - I:225-6 c.f. XII: 531

later work, he piles on the Patristic quotes to defend the position.²² Again, writing in 1620, Ussher made an attack on Catholic veneration of angels, arguing that Christ is the Head of the body, and this is sealed by communion with Him. Idolatry breaks this union, and in this context, Ussher quotes Colossians 2:9, and Canon 35 of the Council of Laodicea (4th C) which condemn the worship of angels. He then quotes Theodoret's attacks on the Oratories of St. Michael, and the forbidding of people to pray to Michael. Ussher says Rome still does these things, in opposition to Scripture and the Fathers. Bellarmine's claim that Genesis 48:16 showed Jacob praying to an angel, is refuted by Ussher's assertion that the angel was Christ Himself, not an angel – an argument Forbes cited and rejected.²³ To this end Ussher quotes Cyril of Alexandria who made the point that since the angel delivered Jacob *from all evil*, and only Christ can do that, it must have been a theophany of some kind.²⁴ The difference from Forbes a few years later is plain.

At this stage I will now consider the Ussher quote that Forbes used to defend the distinction between invocation and advocacy.²⁵ The tract in question is *An Answer to a challenge made by a Jesuit in Ireland – Of Prayer to Saints* (1625).²⁶ From the beginning, Ussher maintains his line, and condemns the invocation of saints and angels unreservedly:

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²² Ussher VII:56-60, 77, 83 – Written 1641

²³ Forbes II:219, 213

²⁴ Ussher II:438-9 c.f. III:458

²⁵ Forbes II:213: See p.325 above.

²⁶ Ussher III:420-97

Whether these blessed spirits pray for us is not the question here: but whether we are to pray to them. God only is to be prayed to.²⁷

Ussher quotes Origen who said angels pray for men, but follows it with his condemnation of Celsus' support of praying to angels.²⁸ Ussher then details a wide range of Patristic sources to defend the position that one must pray to God only, and starts to discuss the root of Rome's error and the Cultus. He says that people had dreams of martyrs and angelic help, and began to pray ask for that help. However, Ussher writes that the people *had recourse unto the mediation of martyrs, in such sort as they had unto the mediation of angels, deserve to be punished with delusions.*²⁹

People felt that martyrs and angels truly helped them when they prayed, and so continued the practice – in error. He then notes a line of thought in Basil which makes the distinction between invocation and advocacy, which built on these kinds of events, and which Ussher saw as the seed of the error of Rome. Ussher wrote:

Here a man may easily discern the breedings of this disease (the practice of invocation), and as it were the grudgings of that ague that afterwards broke out into a pestilential fever. The martyr here is *vocatus*, not *invocatus*: not called upon by being prayed unto, but called to join with others in putting up the same petition with his and their God. For as the Church militant we have our fellow soldiers striving together with us, and

²⁷ Ussher III:422

²⁸ Ussher III: 423ff c.f. Origen: Hom. Joshua 16; Comm. Rom. II:2; Con. Cel. 8:1

²⁹ Ussher III:444

helping us together with their prayers to God for us, and yet therefore we pray for one another, we do not pray to another. This evil weed grew apace, yet it was so cropt at first by the skilful husbandmen of the Church, that it got nothing near that height which under the Papacy we see it is now grown unto.³⁰

Forbes is correct that Ussher notes the distinction between invocation and advocacy, but he doesn't say that Ussher sees it as, while perhaps a technically legitimate distinction, the very move that led to the Cultus spiralling out of control under the Papacy. It is difficult to see think Ussher supported any practice based on the distinction, as this was the *evil weed* which corrupted Rome so completely. To underline this the following 40 or so pages of the tract vehemently attacks the invocation of angels and saints and their worship as straight idolatry and thus totally forbidden. Forbes's use of Ussher is dubious at best, and throws doubt upon his whole methodology in his *Considerationes*, since Ussher cites the distinction, but then condemns the application of it as the very source of Rome's error.

Another statement which challenges Forbes comes in a discussion of how angels relate to the mercy seat:

The only means whereby God standing above, and His Israel lying here below, are conjured together, and the only ladder whereby heaven may be sealed by us, is the Son of Man; the type of whose flesh, the veil, was therefore commanded to be made with cherubims

³⁰ Ussher III:445 c.f. Basil: Hom. 26

(c.f. Ex. 26:31-36) to show that we come to an innumerable company of angels. ... (Christ) as the head of the church has power to send forth all those ministering spirits, to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.³¹

The angels depicted by Jacob's Ladder are an image of Christ, and this goes back to a previously made point – that angels in the Old Testament are sometimes symbols of, or theophanies of, Christ, and not angels in themselves. It is also worth noting that Ussher says that it is a picture of men coming into the company of angels, not of angelic ministry per se. Finally, ministry is only for the elect, since he makes the point that it is for *the heirs of salvation*. He also makes the point that it is in Christ's power (as head of the church) to send the angels, and this rooting of angelic ministry in Christ's headship is a feature of Calvinist thought – as Sibbes will show.

Broadly then, Ussher follows closely the approach that was set by the Elizabethan writers – a rejection of Catholic angelology, and no real interest in engaging in the subject (despite having the wider knowledge to do so). This is an approach which would have struggled with that of Donne, and one that could never have accepted the ideas proposed by Forbes.

³¹ Ussher IV:609

(3) John Cosin's Criticism of Calvinist Angelology.

John Cosin (1594-1672) was a scholar, who was close to Laud and other leading High Churchmen of the period. He was anti-Puritan and anti-Rome, but nevertheless he worked hard for conformity without resorting to some of the tactics used by others, while his zealousness for the Laudian Church did not preclude friendly contact with many Puritans. ³² In 1625 he wrote his *Devotions* for Queen Henrietta Maria's entourage as a replacement for their Catholic prayer books. These *popish devotions* (a charge that followed him), ³³ were the cause of much concern to some. ³⁴ For example, besides saying that angels and saints were *employed in prayer* in heaven for *our benefit*, ³⁵ there was a prayer for the King and Queen which included the following stanza:

Oh, send thine angel,
To his blessed side,
And bid them there abide,
To be at once,
Guardian and guide. ³⁶

³² Cosin (LACT) I:xvii

³³ I:xvii

³⁴ Dever p.80

³⁵ II:231

³⁶ II:289

This indicates he was in the same mould as others of the Golden Age, and from his position of anti-Calvinism he raised two questions about angels in the Calvinist scheme – *What is the scope and level of angelic ministry?* and *Who is it for?*

Cosin preached over a period of almost 50 years, but for us what he was saying in the 1620s is important. It is here that he uses angelology to criticise Calvinism, and his work provides a context for Sibbes who will be discussed next.

Cosin's Epiphany sermon (Matthew 2:1-2) ³⁷ in 1621 related how angels must have been surprised by the fact that magi and lowly shepherds were at the birth of Christ. It was understandable that angels came to worship, but it was shocking that the magi instructed in occultic astrology came, and that *rude and ignorant* shepherds were also present – and this is telling. ³⁸ For Cosin, this demonstrates God's inclusivity and love for the *whole earth*, ³⁹ and is an implicit criticism of the Calvinist concept of Church as a Godly community for the elect alone, and of the idea of limited atonement, the corollary to which is that angels only minister to the elect. Cosin here indicates that angels minister not only to the Godly elect, but to all, in order to lead them towards Christ. The point made here, that angels minister to all, is one that Sibbes challenged, saying that angelic ministry is solely limited to the Church and elect.

³⁷ I:1-23

³⁸ I:15

³⁹ I:3

In Cosin's sermon on Matthew 4:6 (1625), the attack on Calvinism becomes much clearer. His argument twists and turns, but finally makes the attack.⁴⁰ Cosin begins talking about angels *having charge over* Christ, and not letting him *dash his foot on a stone*. Since Satan knows how to abuse Scripture for his own ends, Cosin describes exactly what angels can be expected to do. Angels ascend and descend, as with Jacob's ladder, to protect men; the Angel of the Lord goes before men; angels pitch their tents round men and stop them stumbling. Yet why do they do this?

They shall not do this out of courtesy, or because they are lovers of mankind, nor shall not at their pleasure leave off when they list, but by special mandate and charge they are and shall be bound to do it, they have precept for it.⁴¹

Angels are not autonomous, but are guided by God in order to bless men, and Cosin cites how angels protect men in their sleep (Jacob's Ladder), go before men to guide the way (the angel in Exodus), and how they encamp around men for protection. How God directs angelic ministry (*mandate, charge, precept*) is defined and developed by Cosin, but with a warning that *all these goodly and gracious promises are comprehended in this charge and protection of the Angels; and all these doth the devil here abuse, as we shall see anon*.

⁴⁰ I:71-84

⁴¹ I:75

What is this devilish abuse? It is that men can always look to angels for protection, regardless of their personal walk with God. Implicitly, men can lose their angelic protection if they sin, but Satan subtly misquotes the Psalm to hide that fact:

(It says) *He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways; and the devil makes it run He shall give His angels charge over thee, whether thou keep thy ways or not.* ⁴²

Why did Satan manipulate it thus? For Cosin, it was to deceive people into thinking that no evil would or could ever befall them since *by this means (Satan) would persuade us that the angels here had an absolute charge over us, without any limitation at all, and they must take care of us, take what way we please, cast ourselves down headlong, or any way.* Reminiscent of Andrewes, Cosin notes that Satan wanted men to be careless about their duties before God, and think they could act however they liked and still enjoy angelic protection:

No matter for keeping those ways that God has set us in, to walk uprightly in them; but keep them or not keep them, the angels shall keep them however. ⁴³

To counter this, Cosin says angels can and do leave those who walk away from God, and they do allow men to *dash their feet*:

⁴² I:75

Certain it is that God has made a way down, and if we keep us not to that, the Angels are discharged of their office from keeping us, and they will look after us no more. ⁴⁴

Thus men's actions affect the ministry toward them, and angelic protection can be lost. Cosin continues, saying that if men walk in God's ways, then, as with Jacob, a whole ladder of angels will ascend and descend upon them:

Here are degrees and stairs made from the pinnacle to the ground; there the Angels were ascending and descending with us, as here they are to take charge over us, but yet upon this condition, that we will keep God's way with them, go up and down by the degrees of the ladder, and use those means that God has appointed for us, or else they are gone. ⁴⁵

This suggests a theology of progressive sanctification, not a Calvinist election scheme, which he confirms:

(The Calvinists) would teach us a shorter cut and make but one degree in all Christianity, as if there were but one step from the ground to the pinnacle. They teach a man to take his raise from predestination, and to give a jump to glorification without any more

⁴³ I:76: See above p.259

⁴⁴ I:77

⁴⁵ I:78

ado; no matter for mortification, or justification, or sanctification; there be no degrees with them. ⁴⁶

Cosin asserts that Calvinism effectively restores Satan's interpretation of this verse, and attacks Calvinism as involving the view that once elected, angels will save a Christian from everything and at all times, regardless of whether he walks in God's ways or not. No, says Cosin, angels keep people in their ways in terms of progressive sanctification, and angelic protection can be lost if one is persistently sinning. ⁴⁷ While this has the feel of a caricature, these were issues that needed to be addressed, and Richard Sibbes tried to do just that.

(4) Richard Sibbes (1577-1635)

Sibbes was ordained as a deacon and priest in Norwich 1607, and became a preacher at Gray's Inn from 1617 – a similar time to Donne. ⁴⁸ A model Calvinist, churchman and conformist, his ministry was mainly under Laud, which meant restrictions – a load under which he struggled, but which didn't drive him to leave the Church, as many did. ⁴⁹ Probably because Laud watched Sibbes very closely, ⁵⁰ his works are primarily devotional and not controversial, and aimed to uplift weak Christians, which shows through strongly. ⁵¹ In spite of the close eye kept on Sibbes, he was both anti-ceremonialism and anti-formalism and made these criticisms of both Rome and the

⁴⁶ I:79

⁴⁷ I:80 c.f. p.82-83

⁴⁸ Dever p.50

⁴⁹ Webster p.165

⁵⁰ Kendal p.103

⁵¹ Kendal p.104

Church of England. While being both anti-Catholic and anti-Arminian in theology, he always made these points in very moderate tones, without any polemic force behind them.⁵² However, while Sibbes was generally un-polemical, the criticisms highlighted by Cosin (whether he heard them directly from Cosin or not, one cannot tell) were ones that he felt he needed to address. Alongside this, Sibbes's approach shows three other characteristics – a desire to subordinate angels to men, an avoidance of discussing angelic election, and a strongly pastoral and practical focus. All these led to an angelology very different from that of his High Church contemporaries.

His angelology is mainly expressed in two sermons, *The Fountain Opened* and *Angel's Acclamations*, so I will build this section around these two, but will reference other works when required.⁵³

(A) THE FOUNTAIN OPENED.

(i) Angels and Men distinguished, and Angelic Knowledge.

In *The Fountain Opened*, based on I Timothy 3:16, Sibbes builds a context upon which he addresses the issues raised by Cosin. First, Sibbes firmly subordinates angels to men:

(Men are not to) envy the blessed angels their greatness (since) we are above Angels themselves; (Christ) took not upon him the nature of angels, but he was God manifest in our flesh. By our union with Christ

⁵² Dever pp.86-7

we be nearer to Him than the very angels are. The angels are not the spouse of God.⁵⁴

This is the first move to place men above angels, perhaps to discourage their veneration. Men are nearer than angels to God, and angels are not the spouse (Bride) of God. While in Hebrews 12:22 men do join with angels in heaven, only man is directly called the Bride of Christ. The society of angels and men is not equated with the Bride of Christ by Sibbes, and in this light he makes the point that it is man's *union with Christ* in the incarnation, which brings them into the Body of Christ. This exalts them above the angels, and suggests that those not in union with Christ by the incarnation (angels) are not exalted in the same way. Thus the incarnation is a key difference between angels and men, and this is a recurring motif.

Later, Sibbes's discusses angelic knowledge, and as well as being a development of Augustine, he highlights again the limitations of angels:

All angels (fallen or not) witnessed Christ as Messiah ... The angels knew of Christ's coming in the flesh, before it was: for what the Church knew, the angels knew in some measure. When God made the promise of the promised seed, the angels knew of it. And in Daniel, the angels speak of the 70 weeks: therefore, before this incarnation, they knew of Him. But now they saw him with wonder in our flesh, now they had experimental knowledge of him. For the angels, besides their

⁵³ The dates for Sibbes's sermons are not clear, but all quotes used are probably from the 1620s and his Gray's Inn sermons.

⁵⁴ Ed. J. Chalmers *The Works of Richard Sibbes* (Aberdeen, 1812) - I:163

natural and supernatural knowledge, they have an experimental knowledge that is daily increased in them, in the Church; they see somewhat to admire continually, in the Church, in the Head, and in the members.⁵⁵

When the angels knew of Christ's mission is not explained, neither is how since they knew before it happened, in Old Testament times, but this seems to be then equated to a knowledge the Church had. Yet they knew in *some measure*, which seems to be less than what the church had. Sibbes then notes three types of angelic knowledge; that which is inherent in their created nature (*natural*), that which given by God (*supernatural*), and that which they learn by observing the Church (*experimental*).⁵⁶ This parallels Augustine's idea of morning and evening knowledge – *natural* and *supernatural* being the morning knowledge, and *experimental* the evening knowledge.⁵⁷ The main difference is that Sibbes is explicit in that natural and supernatural knowledge are given, and experimental knowledge is learnt through the Church. It shows that Sibbes saw angelic knowledge as forever rooted in the same unchanging truth of God, but that angels grow in understanding as they witness and experience God's creation and His work in His Bride, the Church. Clearly, angels were not created with perfect knowledge, and they still lacked and needed to grow in knowledge. Elsewhere, he writes:

⁵⁵ I:178-9

⁵⁶ Kendall p.9 - "(*Experimental knowledge*) refers to experience (and) also to testing a hypothesis by an experiment."

⁵⁷ See pp.50-1 above - c.f. Gen. Lit. IV:26; De Civ.: IV:31

They are servants to do good to the church; and they are fellow students with us. They study the mysteries of salvation, the beauty of God, the wonderful transcendent love, grace and mercy of God to this church (I Peter 1:10-11) ... They are students with us of those blessed mysteries. Something is revealed to them, some grace and mercy to the church, that they knew not before experimentally. ⁵⁸

Moving on from here, in another place, Sibbes says:

All the angels of heaven ... cannot bring light into the soul, they cannot bring light into the heart. They can speak of divine things, but they understand them little. But to bring light into the heart, that the heart might taste them and yield obedience to believe, they cannot do. ... (Angels) be taught of God. ⁵⁹

The angelic capacity to talk into men's hearts and souls is limited since they do not have the requisite knowledge or understanding to do so. Angels are still learning, as men are, which could be seen as another (implicit) move to say that it is of no use invoking angelic assistance to bring enlightenment, since they simply don't know enough to enlighten men.

These last two quotes highlight two distinctions. First is that angels are servants *to do good*, but are not able to stir belief – doing good is not the same as leading one towards God or salvation. Second is that angels telling of *divine things*, is not the

⁵⁸ II:231-2

same as *bringing light* to a man's heart. These distinctions are a feature of how Sibbes conceives angelic ministry, as he tries to maintain the truth of a true and effective angelic ministry, while never giving angels any role in the salvation process – and there are further examples of this later.

(ii) The nature of Angelic ministry.

At this point, Sibbes starts to explain angelic ministry, and implicitly addresses the criticisms that Cosin had raised as to whether angelic ministry in a Calvinist scheme is constant regardless of the sinfulness of the angel's charge. He begins by saying:

It is the angels' office to remove impediments that hinder us from Christ. A Christian shall have angels to remove the stones, the hindrances that are between heaven and him, rather than they shall be any impediment to salvation.⁶⁰

Calvinists would be faced with a dilemma at this stage. Although the stones removed are hindrances to heaven, this cannot lead to a doctrine where angels are involved in the salvation process. If one is elected then nothing can impede someone from Christ, so what exactly would angels remove? Obstacles could not be of spiritual importance, since election supersedes all of these. Election is irresistible, and angels are not involved in it anyway – yet the Bible is clear that angels assist men. The answer Sibbes gives (and a point noted by Cosin), is that angels are a part of the way that God ensures

⁵⁹ II:465

⁶⁰ I:179

that man's election is assured. Sibbes relates examples from Christ's life to indicate this constant presence of angels – they were at His birth, resurrection, and ascension, and many points in between. Sibbes concludes that:

Again from hence, that Christ was seen, and attended on, and admired by angels, there is a great deal of comfort issued to us – it is the ground of all the attendance and comfort that we have from the angels. ... They attended upon him, as the Head; they attended upon us, as the members.

Angelic ministry to men flows from their ministry to Christ, as Sibbes puts it, *second hand*, or as *a derivative comfort*, since *whatever they did to him they do to us, because there is the same respect to Head and members*.⁶¹ Since Christ is the Head of the Church, and angels serve Him, this leads them to serve the Body of which He is Head. From here Sibbes looks at angelic ministry toward men, starting with a series of straight Biblical references, and then saying:

The angels will forever love, and honour and attend us. Why? For what ground have they respect for us at all? It is Christ, whose members and spouse we are. So long as the Church has any relation to Christ, so long shall the angels respect the Church; but the Church has its relationship with Christ forever; therefore, the respect that the blessed angels have to Christ and the Church is forever and ever.⁶²

⁶¹ I:180-1

Angels only minister to men and the Church because they are in Christ, and since only the elect would be so, angelic ministry is thus limited to them. That angels only assist Christians is consistent with a Calvinist understanding of God's view of the reprobate. It also attempts to give context to angels working in/through the church, suggesting that one should understand angels and their ministry from within the context of the church of the elect, and God's general providence toward it. It also means that angels who minister only to the elect cannot be a part of the salvation process. Sibbes then makes a telling comment:

We do not see them as in the former times, before Christ's incarnation, it is true, because now Christ has come in the flesh, the government of the church is spiritual, and we are not supported with these glorious manifestations, *but they are about us in an invisible manner*. We have Elizer's (Elijah c.f. II K 2:11) guard about us continually, but *we see them not*. There were more apparitions in the infancy of the church, because, the dispensation at Christ was according to the weak state of the church. But now Christ is came in the flesh and received up in glory, there is more abundance of spirit. *We should be more spiritual and heavenly minded, and not look for outward apparitions of angels;*

⁶² I:182 c.f. Ex. 24/25; Heb. 1; Gen 24; Dan. 7 cited

*but be content that we have a guard of them about us, as every Christian has.*⁶³

A number of points arise from this passage. Initially, Sibbes contends that the incarnation meant that the Church did not need the same angelic assistance as had done – the *visible government* during the time of the Old Testament. However, he needs to qualify this since the Bible shows a visible ministry to the Church after Christ's ascension.⁶⁴ Sibbes explains that when the church was weak, it had visible angelic ministry – but now the Church is strong there is no need for such a visible ministry. There is now a full, but invisible ministry to the Church of the elect. Yet with this realisation of the extent of angelic ministry, Sibbes applies caution saying that *heavenly minded* people do not look for angels or angelic activity. One must be content to know they are there, and guard the elect:

If a man be a true Christian, he has God and angels about him always. A Christian is a king, he is never without his guard, that invisible guard of angels. What if a man have nobody with him when he dies? ... God and his good angel (will) carry his soul to heaven ... a guard of angels to help and comfort him, and to carry his soul to the place of happiness. In our infancy, in our tender years, we are committed to their custody; afterwards, in our dangers, they pitch their tents about

⁶³ I:182 – my italics.

⁶⁴ E.g. Acts 5:19; 8:26; 10:3-7; 12:7; 12:23

us ... we have association with them even from our infancy until we be in glory. Indeed, they are our nurses.⁶⁵

Using the same allusion to Psalm 34:7 as Bayly, Sibbes says that from birth through to death, and into heaven, angels are with the elect (just as they were with Christ). Only *true Christians* have this ministry, as angels *are ministering spirits, for the comfort of the elect*.⁶⁶ But with this assistance, and the surety of election, how then can a man fall into difficulty if angels are everywhere to protect them? Could bad happenings indicate angels judging the wicked (the reprobate)? Sibbes replies:

When we do fall into inconvenience, it is because we are not in our way. If we are out of our way, they have not the charge over us; they are to keep us in our ways.

Sibbes implicitly addresses Cosin here. Taking a step back from the quote, angels protect men when they obey God, and men who do not obey God do not have angelic protection - and this makes sense of a view of double predestination. It is axiomatic that men who are elected essentially walk where God wants them to, and men who are not, do not, and so angelic protection is therefore only given to the elect and not the reprobate. It is a logical move to then say that men cannot lose their angelic protection – exactly the position Cosin rejects. From this quote then, angels *keeping men in their ways*, the ways consistent with election, reaffirms Sibbes' view that angels are part of ensuring election. Yet this raises a question – how do you then explain calamity

⁶⁵ I:184 c.f. I:248 – The term *nurses* is interesting as it is a term used by Origen, and in a similar context. See above p.40

befalling Christians, or success happening to non-Christians? Does it show they have no angelic protection, and are thus not elect, and vice-versa? To address this, Sibbes contends that angels sometimes test men, to lead them closer to a Godly lifestyle:

They deliver us not only from evil, that we fall into, but they keep us in ill ... that we may be exercised and bettered by it. ⁶⁷

Here is where Sibbes's pastoral concerns come to the fore. One cannot ascertain from outward appearances if one is elect or not, nor from the calamity that may befall somebody, and this is important. The idea of *temporary faith*, a doctrine espoused in the early 17th, was the way that Calvinists explained how one can show all the signs of being saved and in Christ, when in actuality one is not elect and are damned despite whatever works or signs are shown. ⁶⁸ Conversely, Calvinists also had to deal with the problem that people often took calamity as a sign that they were not elect (and thus could never be), and so fell into absolute despair. ⁶⁹ Thus Sibbes needed to comfort people that calamity did not equate to an absence of angelic protection, and thus non-election – it was simply a testing and refining by angels.

Sibbes concludes this section with an exhortation for men to be aware and respectful of angels, in order to promote obedience. Angelic ministry is to promote obedience and good works and this will be discussed more fully in the next section:

⁶⁶ I:187: See p.115 above.

⁶⁷ I:184

⁶⁸ Kendal p.7

⁶⁹ Dever pp.162-3

We must learn this duty, not to grieve these good spirits. It is wondrous humility that they will stoop to be servants to us ... (It is) one motive to keep us in the way of obedience.⁷⁰

(iii) Why God has angelic ministry.

At this point, Sibbes appears to be confronted with a more profound issue. In the light of such a powerful doctrine of election, if men have the all-sovereign God, Christ, and their election to protect them, why does God need angels at all? It seems that Sibbes is acutely aware of the difficulties that such a tight theological system as presented by Calvinism shows, and he knows he needs to address this. He has indicated that angels make men's election sure, but surely God could do this without them. So why do angels exist?

The creatures that God has ordained in their several ranks, they are not for any defect in God, to supply his want of power, but to further to enlarge and demonstrate his goodness. He is the Lord of Hosts, therefore He will have hosts of creatures, one under another and all serviceable to his end – to bring a company to salvation, to a supernatural end ... He could do it all Himself but having ordained such ranks of creatures, he makes all to serve for that end. ... So he will have his angels attend us, though he watch over us by his own providence: this takes not away any care of his, but he shows his care

⁷⁰ I:185

in the attendance of angels. ... He uses them to carry his love and care to us.⁷¹

God does not lack in Himself, nor does He need angels. God could do all things Himself, but He chooses not to, and so He uses angels alongside His own direct action to do two things – first, to further demonstrate His goodness, and second, to bring the elect to salvation. The final sentence hints at another reason, that angels carry God's blessing (not salvation) to men - His *love and care*. As noted, Sibbes says that God uses angels to *bring a company* (the elect) *to salvation*, and this is the end for which they serve. From this, one can now ask *how* do angels assist men? As indicated, all aspects of the soul's salvation falls upon Christ, not the angels, so nothing spiritual can be involved. So what does angelic ministry achieve?

The inward man is especially subject to the spirit of Christ – it is God that bows the neck of the inward man. But yet, notwithstanding, if the devils can suggest sin, angels are as strong as devils, and stronger and wiser too, (so) whatsoever they can do in evil, the good angels can do in good. Therefore no question, but *they suggest many thoughts that are good – they are not only a guard about us, but they are tutors to teach and instruct us – they minister good thoughts, and stir up good motions and suggestions. They work not upon the heart of man, immediately to alter and change it (that is proper to God), but by stirring up motions and, by way of suggestions, as the devils do in ill, so they in good.* Therefore it is said, they comforted our blessed

⁷¹ I:185

Saviour ... so they comfort God's children by presenting to their thoughts (we know not how, the manner is mystical, it is not for us to search into), *good motions, by stirring up to good*, only the altering and change of our dispositions, that is proper to the Holy Spirit of God.⁷²

Sibbes highlights exactly the problem surrounding what the influence of angels upon men is. It is almost unavoidable to say that fallen angels can and do move men towards sin and damnation, but this then suggests the converse position that good angels can move men toward good and Christ, yet one cannot attribute saving motion to angels. Angelic influence must exist to certain extent, and Sibbes tries to identify that point, but needs to keep in mind the question *What is the difference between ministering good thoughts, stirring up good motions, and teaching and instructing men, and guiding men towards salvation?* Sibbes says that angels stir men towards good thoughts, motions and suggestions, but it is the Holy Spirit who actually alters them. Angels are also *tutors* and *teachers*, but since Sibbes previously said that angels do not know the mystery of salvation, and that they have learned this from observation of men and the Church, what do they teach? It cannot be about salvation, so it is probably about God, His works and His wider goodness (as previously noted). Salvation is an election issue, so does it really matter what angels say to the mind? Yet, why would angels suggest things to the mind if they ultimately had no benefit to the person concerned? It must somehow assist men to have angels suggesting things to them. Sibbes appears to resolve this by saying that men knowing about angels will *Stir us up to get interested in Christ*, and that *this should teach us likewise to carry ourselves answerable to our condition ... to carry ourselves as if we were in*

⁷² I:186-7 (my italics)

heaven.⁷³ - thus it seems that men's knowledge of angels leads to a knowledge of Christ, and stirs good works and encourages a holy life. Thus angelic ministry is to stir up good, to interest men in Christ, to keep men in obedience and God's ways, by speaking into men's hearts.

Sibbes now adds a wider context to this:

The angels have a double office, a superior office, and an inferior - the superior office they have is to attend upon God, to serve God and Christ, to minister to our Head; the inferior office is to attend his church, and to conflict with the evil angels that are about us continually.⁷⁴

The above rôle is now placed in context. The superior rôle of angels is not to minister to men – that is their inferior rôle, which also includes fighting demons – but to serve God and Christ, yet this would necessarily lead to ministry to the Church anyway. Sibbes then returns to the idea that this should drive men to be more obedient to God:

Undoubtedly, if we have the spiritual eye of faith, to believe and know this, answerable to the things themselves and their excellency, it would work a more glorious disposition in Christians, than there is, to carry ourselves as if we are in heaven before our time.⁷⁵

⁷³ I:187

⁷⁴ I:187

⁷⁵ I:187-8

This linking of angelic ministry, blessing the church, and being a reason for holiness, is also found in *A Breathing After God*, where Sibbes talks of angels being present in churches:

The church is beautiful in regard of the angels, that are always attending in our assemblies, *and see how we carry ourselves*. Here is not only the Father, Son and Holy Ghost distributing grace and mercy, but likewise the blessed angels, as *pure instruments*, are in our assemblies. ... By the cherubims in the curtains of the tabernacle, was set forth the attendance of the angels over the church.

This parallels Chrysostom, and is a picture used by others.⁷⁶ Angels are always present in churches, and watching how men behave, and presumably promoting good lives as a result, but here, again, we see that it is the Triune God who gives grace and mercy, and angels attend the church to stir good works and lives simply as His *instruments*. However, angels being created to minister to men is identified by Sibbes as the root of the angelic fall:

Oh, the pride of man's nature! When the more glorious nature of angels disdain not to be our servants. ... What a devilish quality is envy and pride that stirs us up to disdain to be useful to one another. ... If angels had taken this state (attitude), where had this attendance been? The devils, that kept not their first estate, being proud spirits,

⁷⁶ II:231 (my italics): See pp. 46-7 above.

they disdained the calling they had – the good angels humble themselves.⁷⁷

Sibbes doesn't develop this, and finishes with a comment in keeping with the Golden Age of English Angelology:

I have spoken something more of it, because we are subject to neglect this blessed truth; therefore, for the time to come, meditate oftener on this *spring of comfort* than formerly we have done.⁷⁸

This may indicate that the criticism of Calvinism as neglecting the Biblical truth and reality of angels, has been realised, and Sibbes is attempting make sense of them from within his theological outlook, but by doing so – by criticising the *neglect* of this *blessed truth and spring of comfort* – goes straight against the tradition rooted in Calvin of *willing ignorance*.

⁷⁷ I:188: See pp.32-4 above.

⁷⁸ I:189 – my italics

(B) ANGEL'S ACCLAMATIONS.

This sermon, the second where Sibbes examines angels and their ministry, is based on the Nativity (Lk. 2:13-14), and starts with a criticism of the newly emerging rationalist thinking – to be described in the next section:

Worldly sottish men, who live here below, they think there is no other state of things than they see, they are only taken up with sense, and pleasures, and greatly show of things; alas, poor souls, there is another manner of state and frame of things, if they had spiritual eyes to see the glory of God, and of Christ our saviour, and the attendants there, an host, a multitude of heavenly angels.⁷⁹

This looks like an early reaction to the rationalism and materialism of people who seriously questioned the existence of angels. Sibbes accuses them of being worldly and sensuous and lacking spiritual eyes to see angels, since they only accept the reality of that which is visible. Hooker's line that said that even pagans could acknowledge the existence of angels is giving way to a more subtle argument.⁸⁰ Angels are not self-evident, and only really spiritually minded Christians could comprehend them. However, Sibbes elsewhere claimed that the spiritually-minded did not look for angels and it was of no concern to them.⁸¹ The tension here is that one must confess the

⁷⁹ I:244

⁸⁰ c.f. Hooker: Ecc. Pol. I:4:1; Bullinger III:328

⁸¹ c.f. I:182

reality of angels, while not looking for their ministry, nor saying they are visibly manifest, while condemning those who deny their existence *because* they are unseen.

Moving on, Sibbes defines aspects of the host, and agrees with Augustine pleading ignorance on details.⁸² However, he sees *consent*, in that where two or three are gathered together in Christ's name, Christ is there, thus angels consented and Christ was there. Also, a host *shows employment - that is the employment of angels here below especially, for the defence of the church, and for the offence of enemies of the church.*⁸³ Finally, a host *implies strength: we have a strong garrison and guard, we are kings in Christ, and we have need of a guard, and God has appointed us a strong guard, a guard of angels.*⁸⁴

Here Sibbes says men *need* a guard, and he explains that this is because the Church's enemies are human as well as demonic:

Beloved, we have need of such comforts and let it not seem slight to us, to hear of angels, because we see them not. There is now an earthly host against the church ... (but we).... have an heavenly host with us ... But there is another host, that see the face of God, that observes and waits on his will, command; we have a heavenly host within the heavens, that having command from God can come down quickly for the defence of the church, and *for every particular Christian*, not only one angel, that is but an opinion that everyone has

⁸² I:244

⁸³ 1:244

⁸⁴ I:245

his angel, but even as God sees good, one, two or more, an multitude, a host of angels.⁸⁵

Sibbes again drives home the point that angels are for the Church and Christians, and the doctrine of Guardian Angels is given short shrift in favour of the wider idea that angels generally protect men, and, again, from here the question arises as to why angels, and not God, defend the Church? Sibbes says:

God uses angels not for any defect in his power in himself to do things ... but for the further demonstration of his goodness; he is so diffusive in goodness, he will have a multitude of creatures that they may be a means to diffuse goodness, angels to the church, and the church to others, it is for spreading his goodness.⁸⁶

As cited earlier, Sibbes cannot posit any need for God, not only to create angels, but to require Him to use them for anything. Yet one cannot argue that it was pointless for God to create them, so Sibbes needs to cite an angelic role that is important, but that then doesn't create a necessity in God, nor one that would cause men to see angels as something preferential to God's direct ministry. He therefore says that angels diffuse God's goodness to the Church, just as conveyers of somebody else's gift – the gift isn't theirs to give – and the gift has nothing to do with salvation. To exercise this role, Sibbes asserts that angels are not autonomous in their action, and are dependent on Christ as their head:

⁸⁵ I:245 – my italics.

⁸⁶ I:246

Christ is the creator of angels, the lord of them, not only as God, but as mediator; as God, he is the creator of angels; as mediator he is the head of the angels.⁸⁷

Angels are dependent on Christ in a similar way as men (Creator and Head), and need the mediation of Christ. This idea of Christ as the angel's mediator, seen in Donne, is not developed further here. Interestingly, though, Christ as mediator is linked to His headship of the angels. Elsewhere, he says more, and in *The Church's Riches*, which deals with Christ's death for mankind, Sibbes says:

Redemption was for mankind, not for angels, since when they fell, they continue in that lapsed state forever.⁸⁸

Also, in *A Heavenly Conference* Sibbes says that God brings angels and men together:

In Christ, angels and we are at one; God, and we, and all. There is a recapitulation and gathering of all things in heaven and earth.⁸⁹

These three passages suggest that angels are not redeemed, but mediated for nonetheless, and this mediation by Christ makes Him their head, and allows Christ to bring everything back to Himself. This indicates that perhaps, like Donne, the angels'

⁸⁷ I:246

⁸⁸ IV:501

⁸⁹ VI:418-9

establishment or confirmation, involved them being placed (in Donne, organised) under Christ's headship.

Returning to the sermon under discussion, Sibbes then lists the angelic ministries shown through Christ's life,⁹⁰ and says that angels do the same for men, which leads him to say that *God and man, and the angels by Christ, have communion and fellowship with us*. The *by Christ* builds on the previous point, as does the fellowship between men and angels by Christ – everything has relationship through Christ. Sibbes, though, wants again to be clear on the dependence of angels on Christ, and man's exaltation above them in the eyes of God because of the incarnation:

There is no creature but hath some good by the incarnation of Christ; even the angels themselves. ... He is not the redeemer of the angels; in some sort he is the head of angels, but he is our redeemer ... we be advanced by the incarnation of Christ, to a higher plane than they. ... (Angels) are not the spouse of Christ, they make up not the mystical Christ as the church does.⁹¹

Despite the fellowship, and the joint benefit received by the incarnation, men are exalted higher than angels, yet God uses angels to minister to mankind – and against those that rebel against God:

There is a separation between good angels and us; for if they being good subjects, take part with Prince, and therefore join against the

⁹⁰ I:247

rebels, as we are: hence it is, that upon the sight of angels, the very hearts of good men are stricken, considering that there is no very good terms between us and angels, till we come to Christ again. ⁹²

Angels and men do not naturally get on together, since men are fallen and sinful (and angels are holy and obedient), and men have rejected Christ their head. So how do men gain the angelic assistance previously cited with such a *separation*? It is by their election and being in Christ, as indicated previously:

If we be at peace with God, all other peace will follow: for good subjects will be at peace with rebels, whom they brought subjection to their king, and all join in one obedience; therefore the angels are brought to God again by Christ. ⁹³

Angels are inextricably linked to men, since it is angelic obedience and being at peace with men which brings angels back to God – thus those demons that rejected the service of men lost their pathway back to God. It was the rejection of a ministry to men, highlighted earlier, that led to the angelic fall, and it is through this ministry that angels meet Christ in the way God desired them to, which could indicate why the idea of angels seeking into the things of God is important. The more angels understand the incarnation and work of Christ, the better they can serve men, and so the closer they come to Christ.

⁹¹ I:248-9

⁹² I:273

(C) The Angelology of Sibbes and Donne.

To conclude, it would be helpful to highlight the differences between Sibbes and his contemporaries – especially Donne, with whom he shared the Gray's Inn platform.

The most obvious one is that whereas Donne cited an angelic role which, although firmly subordinated to that of the Church, still gave room for Guardian Angels, and a part to this angel (and others) in moving men specifically towards salvation. In contrast, Sibbes saw little rôle beyond the angel moving men towards good works consistent with their election. In this light, Donne sees a wide, interconnected system of God, Church and Angels which work together, under God, to bring men to a knowledge of Christ, whereas for Sibbes, the angels' primary rôle is to serve God in heaven, and very much secondary is their rôle toward the elect in the Church.⁹⁴

Angelic knowledge also provides a stark difference. Sibbes sees a real limitation in what angels know and can say, whereas Donne gives them an ability to see into men's hearts and minds, which allows them to then bring sins before God. From here, the knowledge of angels is promoted by Donne as a positive part of a man's devotional life, yet Sibbes wants to simply raise awareness of angels without giving them any position which would lead to a positive part in men's devotional life, beyond vague references to stirring up interest toward Christ.

⁹³ I:274

⁹⁴ For example, see above pp.302ff

As the 1620s passed, in addition to these differences between High Church and Calvinist ideas, a new set of issues arose. The first, highlighted by Sibbes in *Angel's Acclamations*, was the growing rationalism which rejected the unseen and/or the difficult to explain. The second was the Civil War and the distractions this caused. However, these did lead to the development of some interesting angelology, as well as the classic Calvinist statement of the Westminster Assembly. These will be examined in the next chapter.

Chapter 9

RATIONALISM AND REACTION (1630-1650)

Introduction.

The early 17th century signalled the growing impact of rationalism. Men were examining the world around them and trying to make scientific and mathematical sense of it, and it was done with an undisputed belief in God. However, as Sibbes indicated in the mid-1620s, certain aspects of this development were disturbing to traditional Christian thought. Although many at the time called it atheism, this is not an accurate term. For example, Thomas Hobbes was accused of this and vehemently refuted it,¹ and his views on angels (as we shall see) show both why he was accused, yet also why he could rightly deny it. Although passed later than our period, the *Act against Blasphemy* (1697) cited as blasphemers and atheists those who denied the Trinity, Christianity or the divine authority of the Old and New Testaments – the point here being that contemporaries saw denial of traditional Christianity as effective or implicit atheism.² Nevertheless, while none of our subjects were atheists in the 20th century sense of the word, both Lord Herbert of Cherbury and Hobbes were at the beginning of a new and challenging age of thought.

¹ D. Berman *A History of Atheism In Britain* (London: Routledge, 1988) p.36

² Berman p.35

A short reminder of the Elizabethan world-view might be helpful at this point. As both Tillyard and Kocher well describe,³ it was an inherently theocentric universe, ordered into fixed hierarchies with the unseen spirit world's existence taken as read. Angels were the intermediate beings and causes between God and man, and as Hooker said, their existence was seen as so obvious that even non-Christians apprehended and understood their existence and role.⁴ The attitude toward scientific exploration in England was not as negative as in other places in Europe, as Kocher explains:

Most Anglican Divines welcomed, with reservations, the increasing stores of human science. From their point of view, everything depended on the way the science was approached and applied. If it was directed to the glory of God and the relief of men's estate (this was acceptable). But if erected as an altar of self-esteem, a source of heresy and disbelief, then nothing could be worse.⁵

During Elizabeth's reign the move toward rationalism, subtle as it was, began to gain pace. Kocher writes:

The swing that Elizabethan science was beginning to make away from scholastic reliance upon unsupported reason, toward fresh

³ P. Kocher *Science and Religion in Elizabethan England* (California: Henry E. Huntington Library and Gallery, 1953); E.M.W. Tillyard *The Elizabethan World Picture* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1943)

⁴ Tillyard pp.11 ff; Kocher p.3; c.f. Hooker: *Ecc Pol* I:4:1

⁵ Kocher p.11

exploitation of facts required, perhaps, no entirely new epistemological theory, but was certainly shift from the old (methods).⁶

The results of this were only really seen in James' reign in terms of seriously challenging theological method, and as we shall see the mediaeval attitudes and methods remained dominant in the period, but the signs were there for the full flourishing of the Enlightenment in the early 18th century. The growing focus on a method of enquiry that rejected anything which could not clearly be known to be true, and which would only accept that which was open to judgement and examination, meant that received knowledge was not to be trusted until tested. ⁷ None wished to undermine religion, quite the opposite, as their studies were simply *the scientist exploring God's great gift of the world*. ⁸ Therefore, while final deductions may well have militated against the current perceived orthodoxy, this was not the aim. However, the impact made was enormous, as Tillyard explains:

Although the general mediaeval picture of the world had survived into the Elizabethan age, its existence by then was precarious. ⁹

Eventually, the situation moved from precarious, to one of steady decline, which led to groups developing outside the traditional thought of the mainstream church - for

⁶ Kocher pp.31-2

⁷ J.A. Herrick *The Radical Rhetoric of the English Deists* (University of South Carolina Press, 1997) p.45

⁸ J.A. Herrick *Against The Faith* (London: Glover & Blair Ltd, 1985) p.31

⁹ Tillyard p.16

example, the Deists, Socinians and Arians. These groups mainly appear after our period, but we see clear precursors and the first attempts to address these challenges.

As for the unrest under Laud and the eventual decline into Civil War, we see a situation similar to the Elizabethan period where, in contrast to the settled times under James which allowed wide theological exploration and speculation, the Church was on the defensive over questions relating to its very existence. Thus, we see angelology used in defence of episcopacy and the hierarchical nature of society, in opposition to flatter models of church and society advocated by many Parliamentarians.

On a different note, it is worth mentioning that three of our main figures from the last section died at the start of this period – Donne (1631), Forbes (1634) and Sibbes (1635). This, combined with the strains created by the already mentioned factors, seems to have led to a decline in interest in angels that the Golden Age showed. However, interest was maintained outside the Church of England, and there are books and writers who, while espousing fascinating angelologies, cannot be included in this study since they fall beyond its boundaries – as, for instance, the Calvinist Thomas Goodwin has done.¹⁰ For example, Thomas Heywood wrote a fascinating book called *The Blessed Hierarchies of Angels* (1635),¹¹ which he dedicated to Henrietta Maria – Charles I's Catholic wife. Heywood, a poet and play-wright, portrays an incredibly poetic Dionysian vision under-pinned by an enormous and eclectic use of sources, both Christian and pagan. However, his contemporaries were far from impressed with it, saying *he is so far from elevating poetry, that he only abuses*

¹⁰ See pp.339 above.

¹¹ T. Heywood *The Blessed Hierarchies of Angels* (London, 1635)

divinity.¹² Even more scathing is the modern comment that the book represented a monument of a ruined philosophy (which) summed up the mediaeval spiritistic beliefs when the great fabric of superstition was beginning to fall – it was a great jungle of fact and fiction, science, superstition and shaky metaphysics.¹³

Again, as late as 1646, Henry Lawrence, an anti-Royalist and anti-episcopal Parliamentarian, whose religious affiliation was that of non-conformist Baptist, and claimed by Milton (who himself wrote extensively of angels in his works) as his virtuous father,¹⁴ wrote *Of Our Communion And Warre With Angels*. Much more of a book of theology than Heywood's, it is a fascinating balance of both Calvinist and High Church angelology, which cited a strict double-predestinarian principle to the angels, while also strongly supporting the doctrine of Guardian Angels where they expressly assist both men's *bodies* and *spirits*.¹⁵ Both of these books fall outside my remit, but they would be well worth examining them in a later and different study.

The structure of this section will be to look at Lord Herbert of Cherbury, who was the first Englishman to posit deist beliefs (c. 1624), and see how this began to reshape angelology, then at Thomas Hobbes and his debates with John Bramhall which throw into sharp relief not only how the new thinking of Hobbes was utterly opposed to the Golden Age thought, but also how he had moved well beyond Herbert. The impact and influence of this debate, and other points of interest from the 1640s and 1650s will be discussed next, mainly (but not solely) based around the thought of Jeremy Taylor, followed by the angelology of the Westminster Confession (1645) which

¹² Cited in A. M. Clark *Thomas Heywood: Playwright and Miscellanist* (Basil Blackwell, 1931) p.144

¹³ Ibid pp.145-6

¹⁴ C. Hill *Milton and the English Revolution* (Faber & Faber, 1977) p.194, 332

¹⁵ H. Lawrence *Of Our Communion and Warre with Angels* (London: Giles Calvert, 1646) p.20, 36-42

highlights how Calvinists expressed their angelology once Laud's restrictive leadership had been removed.

(1) Lord Herbert of Cherbury (1583-1648)

The beginnings of English Deism, and its main principles are found in the writings of Lord Herbert of Cherbury - his most famous book being *De Veritate* (1624), which raised questions about traditional methods of theological investigation.¹⁶ His aim was to discover the timeless and universal ways of knowing and being reconciled with God. Herbert cited the absolute necessity for a universally available way of understanding and following God with universal pointers to religious truth. Herbert denied that one could be dogmatic about what true religion contained, and posited what he called *Common Notions*, that is, a lowest common denominator which is true for all men, and upon which all religion builds. These *Common Notions* are inscribed on men's hearts by God (they are innate truths), and they prescribe a way to God which is within the compass of the human understanding and will to comprehend.¹⁷

The *Common Notions* are:

¹⁶ P. Byrne *Natural Religion and the Nature of Religion* (London: Routledge, 1989) pp.22-3
¹⁷ Byrne p.26 c.f. Herrick *Rhetoric* p.47

- The Deity exists. ¹⁸
- Man should honour and worship the Deity. ¹⁹
- Worship must be expressed in morality. ²⁰
- One must repent of sin, and leave the sinful life. ²¹
- God both temporally and eternally rewards and punishes according to an individual's virtue. ²²

One cannot discover *Common Notions* by the *inextricable confusion of oral or written tradition to which men had given their allegiance*. Distinct from a church built on tradition and Scripture, Herbert said:

The only catholic and uniform church is the doctrine of Common Notions which comprehends all places and men (and) this church alone reveals the Divine Universal Providence, or the wisdom of Nature. ²³

Inherently subordinating written revelation to natural revelation, Common Notions were perceivable in Nature, and apprehendable to all people since it is *not likely that what is not evident to the faculties of all, can have any bearing on the whole human race*. ²⁴

¹⁸ *De Veritate*: reproduced in: P. Gay *Deism: An Anthology* (Princeton: Van Nostrand, 1968) pp.32ff

¹⁹ Ibid. p.34

²⁰ Ibid. pp.36-7

²¹ Ibid. p.37

²² Ibid. pp.39-40

²³ Ibid. p.40

²⁴ Ibid. p.41

There is universality in God's revelation that can be gained through observation of God's creation, and this idea of universality underpins Herbert's approach, since he effectively mounts an argument based on universal or common assent,²⁵ which says that if all religions teach something, it is a universal revelation of God for all people, and is thus a Common Notion. However, if something is unique to a religion, this would not be required by God. In short, the world around man will naturally lead them to a base-line religion, and this approach raises four main questions for angelology.

- (a) Are angels, as Hooker and Bullinger said, self-evident enough for even non-Christians to identify them in creation?
- (b) Are angels part of supernatural revelation, or a theological area so rooted in Church tradition, that they cannot be safely verified?
- (c) Sibbes cited the need for *spiritual eyes* to see them. Since they are unseen, therefore not demonstrable, do they fall outside Herbert's remit?
- (d) Scripture and theologians attributed various events in Nature to God acting out His providence, and angels were involved in this. Can one deduce angels from causes and effects?

Interestingly, Herbert did not deny that God also revealed truth to men apart from that which was natural and common to all, however it was only valid when certain conditions were met. First that it is invoked by prayer; second it is given directly to one person - not received second hand from others; third, it recommends that one

²⁵ Berman p.31 c.f. Gay p.32, 34

does good; fourth, that the *Divine Spirit* is felt at the time.²⁶ Strangely, it is here that we get a taste of what Herbert may have thought about angels – that God uses them to communicate with people:

As for the means of revelation it is generally held that revelations are most frequently made with the medium of spirits which have been *recognised in all ages* as a special order of beings, invisible, impalpable, free of physical substance, endowed with rapid movement, and variously called angels, demons, intelligences and geniuses. Some doubts, however, exist concerning their nature.²⁷

Lord Herbert continues:

Some people imagine them to be good, others think they are evil, so we can reasonably leave their real character an open question. But this need not disturb us, as long as the preceding conditions are present ... (It is a true revelation if) the revelation should have proceeded from the Supreme God, speaking with his own voice, as He is said formerly to have done, or through the agency of some good angel.²⁸

For Herbert, angelic beings, though he refuses to delve into quite what they are, not only exist, but are the vehicles of God's revelation to men *recognised through the*

²⁶ Gay p.3

²⁷ Ibid. p.43 – my italics.

²⁸ Ibid. p.43

ages. Secondly, he accepts that visitations occur where angels speak with the voice of God, and that angelic ministry with a clear communicative function continued. In this light, one is moved to ask the following question:

Besides the fact that God uses angels to communicate with men, in a manner beyond natural revelation, if Common Notions are deduced from God revealing Himself (in nature or otherwise), then common themes throughout religions could justly be seen as a true reflection of God's truth. Herbert's experience of other religions would have probably been limited to Judaism and Islam, plus an understanding of Greek and Roman paganism. All these religions teach the existence of angels in one form or another. Even with different written revelations/traditions, all these religions correctly deduced angels from the Natural Revelation around them. Therefore, can angels be called a Common Notion?

Herbert doesn't make this move, and while he is generally agnostic, angelic ministry still occupies a place in his thought as a way that God communicates Himself to His Creation. However radical Herbert was in terms of his natural theology, over and against traditional Christianity, his cosmology was firmly mediaeval in content. However, within a generation, Thomas Hobbes and his thought had arisen, which met with a much sterner response as theologians saw the inherent challenges it represented.

(2) The John Bramhall And Thomas Hobbes Debates.

Introduction.

John Bramhall (1594-1663) was the pro-episcopacy and anti-presbyterian Archbishop of Armagh. Clearly of the High Church party, while being critical of Rome, he advocated reunion with Rome (if Rome reformed).²⁹ Of all his writings and works, his lasting monument is the attempt to refute the new thinking of Thomas Hobbes. While Hobbes has long had the reputation of being a pessimistic atheist, some see him as holding to an early form of deism driven by natural theology, as his rationalism and scepticism drove him to reject much of traditional Christianity:

Hobbes's idea of natural religion can fairly be described as deist, and his blend of deism and civil religion was proved prophetic of much Enlightenment thinking. ... All religions, Hobbes claimed, are simply ways of worshipping the inscrutable creator, and their doctrines and practices are whatever are deemed culturally appropriate as acts of worship.³⁰

While similar to Herbert's thought, Hobbes developed way beyond it, and his general approach needs to be explained to throw a full light on his angelology. To begin with, Hobbes's religion was a combination of Calvinist theology and discursive

²⁹ ODCC p.232

³⁰ R. Tuck *Hobbes* (Oxford University Press, 1989) pp.77-79 c.f. C. Hill *The World Turned Upside Down* (London: Penguin, 1978) p.388

rationalism, joined with a philosophical scepticism and a very sound knowledge of the Bible. As Brown writes:

No other Calvinist ever drew out more consistently the deterministic implications of predestination or insisted more vigorously on its relationship to the absolute sovereignty of God.³¹

Hobbes tended to restrict reason to the exploration of causes, and in this light his strong defence of the Biblical tradition of a God who acts *directly* in nature and history is crucial,³² since much of his approach toward angelic ministry is predicated on the fact that God is the absolute Cause of the world, and all that is, and happens, within it.³³ This highlights two issues. First, since he posits such a strong doctrine of God's sovereignty and God as the cause of all things, what would He need angels for? Second is that he based his thought on what he could deduce and observe. In this light, all Hobbes could observe was the last cause in a chain, the first cause of which was God. All intervening causes, such as angels, simply would not be identifiable, and so Hobbes would struggle to accept them as true.

On top of this, Hobbes was a materialist – everything that exists is material in nature, occupying space and time, and is thus generally accessible to perception by sight and touch, or by analysing its causal properties. Thus, materialism excludes the possibility of disembodied (incorporeal) minds or spirits, such as God or angels³⁴ and in this

³¹ Ed. K. Brown *Hobbes Studies* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965) p.142 c.f. Hill p.388, 394

³² Brown p.143

³³ Brown p.144

³⁴ Eds A. Bullock, O. Stallybrass *Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought* (London Fontana Press, 1977) pp.507-8

light, Hobbes argued that God was, in some sense, material.³⁵ To finally compound this, Hobbes reduced religion to a confession of Jesus Christ, and then all other points of doctrine were determined by the monarch – thus accuracy of belief in everything was just not essential.³⁶ Angels could be jettisoned from a belief system with impunity, since they do not impinge on the essential confession of Jesus Christ as Lord.

Arguably, we see the logical conclusion of Calvinism's angelology in Hobbes – God, with such absolute and deterministic sovereignty simply does not need angels, and the main theme of Hobbes's angelology is that the existence of angels does not make sense, and with all probability, they do not exist.

(A) *De Cive* and *Liberty and Necessity*.

During the debates between Hobbes and Bramhall, the issue of angels arose twice. The first was around Hobbes' treatise *Liberty and Necessity* (c. 1646), which is a reply to objections raised by Bramhall to his book *De Cive* (1642) – Bramhall's book being called *A Defence of True Liberty from Antecedant and Extrinsical Necessity*.³⁷ The second time was in *Leviathan* (1651), which will be discussed later. The argument arose from debates around predestination - what exactly is freewill, and how much do men have? Hobbes as a form of Calvinist, and Bramhall as an Arminian, demonstrated two sides of this debate, and it is framed in the form of

³⁵ Brown p.143 – It should be noted that some orthodox Patristic writers also struggled to assign true incorporeality to angels, but for different reasons: See p.30 above.

³⁶ Hobbes: *De Civ.* 18:9 c.f. Brown pp.153-7 c.f. Tuck pp.77-9; Hill p.388

³⁷ Bramhall: Vol. IV (LACT): The volume is arranged with a Hobbes quote in full, followed by the response by Bramhall. Thus Hobbes's quotes are cited from this volume.

defining the concept of *necessity*.³⁸ Hobbes had developed a form of *determinism* to which Bramhall objected. Determinism is the theory that the world, or nature, is subject to causal law - that every event has a cause. If this is true, then every event that happens has to happen, since it logically follows from a description of the conditions where it occurred, and the laws of nature where it occurs, that it must occur – it is a *necessity*.³⁹ It also follows that any event that did not happen could never have happened. It is a form of fatalism that allows no freedom to either God, or man, or creation. God has set things in motion, and His ways cannot be frustrated, nor does He change His mind. Allowing true freedom to creatures, however, means that God is not truly sovereign.

Hobbes begins with the following statement, which makes his determinism clear:

The question is plainly this – whether all agents, and all events, natural, civil, moral be predetermined extrinsically and inevitably without their own concurrence in the determinations, so as all actions and events which either are or shall be cannot but be, nor can be other wise, after any other manner, or in any other place, time, number, measure, order nor to any other end, and all this, in respect of the Supreme Cause, or a concourse of extrinsical causes determining them to the one.⁴⁰

³⁸ A.P, Martinich *The Two Gods Of Leviathan* (CUP, 1992) pp.32-33

³⁹ IV:32 c.f. Ed. T. Sorrel *Cambridge Companion to Hobbes* (CUP, 1996) pp.70f

⁴⁰ Bramhall IV:32

Bramhall's reply is that true liberty is the freedom from determinism, and he introduces angels into the argument as an example that beings are truly free, yet can do only one thing (i.e. *good*). He starts by saying:

I understand a liberty from necessity, or rather from necessitation, that is, a universal immunity from all inevitability and determination to one.⁴¹

Bramhall uses a Scholastic definition against Hobbes (one from Peter Lombard),⁴² and cites two kinds of freedom (liberty). First is the *liberty of contradiction or exercise*, which is a freedom as a result of exercising choice. It is not a freedom to do both good and evil but *a liberty to do or not to do this or that good*.⁴³ Second is the *liberty of contrariety or specification*, and it is found in men with reason and understanding, and it is the freedom to do both good and evil. Thus angels and God have *liberty of contradiction*, and Men have *the liberty of contrariety*. However, why are angels not subject to *the liberty of contrariety* as men are? It is because:

The understandings of the angels are clearer, their power and dominion over their actions is greater, they have no sensitive appetites to distract them, no organs to be disturbed. ... (The) liberty of men is (therefore) more large ...(since)... God and angels do not have the power to good and evil, indifferently, as man hath.⁴⁴

⁴¹ IV:33

⁴² Lombard: Sent. II:25:1

⁴³ IV:33

⁴⁴ IV:36

Angels do not have freedom in the same terms as man, which is what Hobbes' determinism requires. (For Hobbes, God's sovereignty and determinism mean, effectively, that neither men nor angels have freedom.) Bramhall's argument is that angels do have freedom, but are so intrinsically different in nature, being and holiness, that they exercise perfectly their free will to the point where they can exclude sin as a possibility. This is similar to Basil who also saw that angels had free will, but also the ability to perfectly exercise it – a line followed by Lombard.⁴⁵ Bramhall does not explicitly cite angelic confirmation since this would look like determinism, so posits an inherent ability in angels perfectly to resist sin. This is in opposition to Hobbes's implicit supposition that good angels would be confirmed by God's determination and thus have no free will, since God would not allow them to choose evil, or sin. Bramhall, however, wants to highlight the intrinsic difference in being, and thus superiority of angels - that they see more clearly, have enormous self-control over themselves, and don't have physical bodies to distract them. Their nature compels them to choose good, and precludes them choosing evil, and this is how the argument develops much later on.

Hobbes' reply shows he is unconvinced by Bramhall's explanation, and feels Bramhall didn't answer his question:

*How is it possible for the liberty of doing or not doing this or that good or evil to consist (as he says it does in God and angels) without a liberty of doing or not doing evil?*⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Basil: De Sp. Sanct. 16; Lombard: Sent. II:7:1-4

⁴⁶ IV:34

For Hobbes, necessity is an *antecedant determination* to one course,⁴⁷ not as Bramhall thought, total freedom within the limits set by their angelic being. From here, the next stage in the argument comes after Hobbes has been arguing that if good angels cannot do bad, then they are deterministically moved. Bramhall refutes this:

Necessity upon a supposition, may sometimes consist true liberty; as when it signifies only an infallible certitude of the understanding in that which it knows to be, or that it shall be. But if the supposition be not in the agent's power, nor depending upon anything that is in his power; if there be an exterior antecedent cause, which doth necessitate the effect to, to call this free is to be *mad with reason*.⁴⁸

What Bramhall is saying here is similar to that which Hooker said, that a being can be utterly compelled towards one course of action if he is perfect in how he acts and thinks. Within this argument Bramhall claims:

God and the good angels do good necessarily, and are more free than we are, but in the degree of freedom, not in the latitude.⁴⁹

This is in terms of liberty of *exercise* not of *specification*. Simply put, angels are not free to do evil, since their nature compels them not to, but they do have absolute and unhindered freedom to choose good, since this is a necessary outcome of their nature.

Why? Because in the case of demons *he that is antecedently necessitated to do*

⁴⁷ IV:28

⁴⁸ IV:121

⁴⁹ IV:121: See above pp.209ff

evil, is not free to do good. ⁵⁰ This applies vice-versa as well - if angels are antecedently necessitated to do good, they cannot do evil. How this position applies to the fall of the angels and demons is unfortunately never discussed by Bramhall. As an orthodox High Churchman, he would not have believed that God made angels evil, but angels, through abuse of free will made themselves evil. Similarly he would not have felt comfortable with the idea of a Calvinist predestination scheme which could suggest God elected angels to fall. However, to be antecedently necessitated to evil, looks like one of these two options, and Bramhall pointedly does not try to explain this.

The essence of Hobbes's response is to ask Bramhall, *What is the difference between angels being compelled by nature to do good, and angels doing good out of necessity (determinism)?* Hobbes calls this a false distinction - two distinctions but no distinction, ⁵¹ and then says about God and the good angels:

I find not in the articles of our faith nor in the decrees of our Church set down in what manner I am to conceive God and the good angels to work by necessity, nor in what sense they work freely. I suspend my sentence at this point. ⁵²

However, while confessing ignorance, Hobbes still makes the point that Bramhall's explanation does not work. He rams home his argument with a broad-brush attack on

⁵⁰ IV:121

⁵¹ IV:123

⁵² IV:122

the Church's mediaeval philosophical heritage, the point of which is to reject the validity of Lombard's distinction, upon which Bramhall's case stands:

You may by this again see the vanity of distinctions used in the Schools. And I do not doubt, but that the imposing of them by authority of doctors in the Church has been a great cause that men have laboured, though by sedition and evil courses, to shake them off. For nothing is more apt to beget hatred than the tyrannising over man's reason and understanding, especially when it is done, not by the Scriptures, but by pretence of learning and more judgement than that of other men. ⁵³

Bramhall's defence here is two-pronged. The first is that the Scholastic tradition, and the tradition of learning it built on, has a proven track record. Second, that Hobbes himself condemned men who used private judgement, and who ignored or despised the learned – which is exactly what Hobbes did! Thus he has no right to plead ignorance on the issue of God and the good angels, and then condemn those who have examined it in depth. Ultimately, for Bramhall, Hobbes is not presenting any coherent alternative to his assertions. ⁵⁴

As can be seen, the fundamental difference between the two men is that Hobbes takes the line that you either have freedom or you don't, and it is that black and white. Bramhall, on the other hand, says that that there are different types and degrees of

⁵³ IV:123

⁵⁴ IV:128-30

freedom with various limits and conditions attached to them, but which all still count as true freedom.

(B) Leviathan.

The second occasion for dispute was caused by Hobbes' masterwork, *Leviathan* (1651), which left behind issues of freedom, and questioned whether angels existed at all. It is here Hobbes' materialism and focus on God as the *Supreme Cause* ⁵⁵ of all things (and thus intermediate causes are not worthy of consideration) really comes to the fore, as God's direct action replaces the intermediate causes of angels. For this reason his position is worth a good examination. His treatment of the Bible in this matter is extreme for one of his time, and this radical approach is well noted by Christopher Hill. ⁵⁶

Chapter 34 of *Leviathan* is called *Of the Signification of SPIRIT, ANGEL and INSPIRATION in the Books of Holy Scripture*, and Hobbes begins it saying that, while he will be true to the teaching of Scripture, he must first define the words used in Scripture in order to be accurate. (This strict definition of words/names is central to Hobbes's method, here and elsewhere.) ⁵⁷ :

It is necessary, before I proceed any further, to determine, out of the Bible, the meaning of such words, as by their ambiguity, may render what I am to inferre upon them, obscure or indisputable. I will begin

⁵⁵ Cited in Bramhall: IV:32

⁵⁶ Hill p.388

⁵⁷ Sorrel pp.100-1

with the words BODY, and SPIRIT, which in the language of the Schools are termed, Substances, Corporeal and Incorporeal.⁵⁸

Firstly, a Body is something that fills a space, and is something that *does not depend on the imagination* - it is truly a part of the Universe, of all that is:

For the Universe, being the aggregate of all Bodies, there is no real part thereof that is not also a Body; nor anything properly a Body, that is not also a part of (that Aggregate of all Bodies) the Universe.

He then links this to Substance:

The same also, because Bodies are subject to change, that is to say, to variety of appearance to the sense of living creatures, is called Substance, that is to say Subject to various accidents.

Thus Bodies can move, experience temperature, and have smell, colour, and taste, which are the accidents of the Body. Hobbes then says these definitions effectively identify Body and Substance exactly, since to be a Body, in the true sense of the word, is to be able to experience change as a Substance does. With this in mind Hobbes makes his philosophical move:

According to this acceptation of the word, *Substance* and *Body*, signify the same thing; and therefore *Substance Incorporeall* are

⁵⁸ Leviathan (ed. R. Tuck): section 207 – All capitalisation and italicisation used are those used by Hobbes, unless otherwise noted.

words, which when they are joined together, destroy one another, as if a man should say, an *Incorporeall Body*.

From this materialist position, incorporeal spirit does not exist. So what is *spirit*? Hobbes uses a number of phrases to describe it - wind, breath, *Idols of the brain* which represent bodies, or a Dream. More bluntly he writes:

(There is) nothing at all there where they seem to be; and in the brain itself, nothing but tumult, proceeding either from the action of the objects, or from the disorderly agitation of the Organs of our Sense. And men, that are otherwise employed, then to search into their causes, know not of themselves, what to call them; and may therefore be easily persuaded, by whose knowledge they much reverence, some to call them Spirits, because the sight judges them corporeall; and some to call them spirits, because the sense of touch discerns nothing in the place where they appear, to resist their fingers.⁵⁹ .

While common speech may identify spirit with invisible bodies or ghosts, Hobbes claims that Scripture only uses it in terms of *any eminent ability, or extraordinary passion, or disease of the mind*. Thus spirit is a thought, mental process, or feeling of either a good, bad or indifferent form. With this base-line, Hobbes defines an Angel as follows:

⁵⁹ Sec. 208

A Messenger, and most often, a Messenger of God: And by a Messenger of God, is signified, anything that makes known his extraordinary Presence; that is to say, the extraordinary manifestation of his power, especially by a Dream or Vision.⁶⁰

Tellingly for Hobbes, Scripture tells nothing about their creation, but they are regularly called Spirits, which to Jews and Gentiles meant either thin (i.e. non-corporeal) bodies, or the life force within creatures. It could also mean:

Images that rise in the fancy in Dreams, and Visions; which are not real Substances, nor last any longer than the Dream, or Vision they appear in; which Apparitions, though no real Substances, but Accidents of the brain; yet when God raises them supernaturally, to signify His will, they are not improperly termed God's Messengers, that is to say, his Angel.⁶¹

Once defined, Hobbes looks at a series of passages from Scripture, but not before making the point that the Sadducees rejected the idea of angels as *permanent creatures of God*, and begins by saying:

If we consider the places in the Old Testament where angels are mentioned, we shall find that in most of them, there can be nothing else understood by the word Angel, but some image raised (supernaturally) in the fancy, to signify the presence of God in the

⁶⁰ Sec. 211

⁶¹ Sec. 211

execution of some supernatural work; and therefore in the rest, where their nature is not expressed, it may be understood in the same manner.⁶²

Thus, *Angels* in the Old Testament are either God Himself directly doing something, or an image in the mind placed directly there by God. Hobbes highlights Genesis 16 where throughout the passage, the person is variously called God or an angel, and so should be understood as God, but as the voice of God only, not a physical manifestation:

Neither was this apparition a Fancy figured, but a Voice. By which it is manifest that Angel signifies here, nothing but God Himself, that caused Agar to supernaturally apprehend a voice from heaven; or rather, nothing else but a voice supernatural, testifying to God's special presence there.

Using this method, Hobbes then writes off the rest of the angelic apparitions throughout Genesis. Similarly the Pillar of Cloud in Exodus 14 is called an angel, and rightly so, since it is a sign of God's presence. Since it was not in the form of a man it demonstrates that angels are not spiritual creatures or persons, just a linguistic tool used to indicate God's presence – as the Bible itself testifies, and Hobbes quotes Exodus 33, where Moses wants God to go with him:

⁶² Sec 212

God did not answer *I will go, nor I will send an Angel in my stead; but thus My presence shall go with thee.* ⁶³

Hobbes says to do a similar refutation of every Old Testament example would take too long, but concludes that since *there is no text in that part of the Old Testament which the Church of England holds as Canonical from which we can conclude that there is, or has been created, any permanent thing (understood by the name of Spirit or Angel) that hath not quantity. ... But in every place, the sense will bear the interpretation of Angel, for Messenger; as John Baptist is called an Angel, and Christ the Angel of the Covenant.* ⁶⁴ But what about the Angels in Daniel who had proper names, Michael and Gabriel, and thus are beings with personality? Michael is another name for Christ, but described as being a Prince, and Gabriel was just a *phantasm* - a vision.

Similarly the New Testament proves nothing, and references can be explained as above. Even when Christ talks of hell being a fire prepared for the Devil and his angels, this demonstrates nothing since flames and fire can hurt only material and physical bodies - so angels must be a physical reality of some kind. Therefore, in keeping with this line, Hobbes suggests that the *Devil and his angels* could signify human opponents of the Church and heretics. Strangely though, a number of New Testament passages point to angels' materiality and reality, ⁶⁵ and Hobbes admits this - angels are permanent and material beings, but he is clear to stress this does not mean

⁶³ Sec. 213

⁶⁴ It is of note that Hobbes, by using the term *Canonical* in terms of the Church of England, he specifically excludes the evidence of the Apocrypha.

⁶⁵ I Cor. 6:3; II Ptr 2:4; Jude 6; Matt. 22:30 are cited.

incorporeal, since to be incorporeal means being nothing.⁶⁶ This initial flaw in his position is followed by a telling statement:

There be divers other places out of which may be drawn the like conclusion. To men that understand the signification of these words, Substance and Incorporeal; as Incorporeal is taken not for subtle body, but for not Body, they imply a contradiction: insomuch as to say (not) an Angel nor Spirit at all. Considering therefore the signification of the word Angel in the Old Testament, and the nature of Dreams and Visions that happen to men by ordinary way of supernatural Nature, I was inclined to this opinion, that Angels were nothing more than supernatural apparitions of the Fancy, raised by special and extraordinary operation of God, thereby to make his presence and commandments known to mankind, and chiefly to his own people. But the many places of the New Testament, and our Saviour's own words, and in such texts, wherein is no suspicion of corruption of the Scripture, have extorted from my feeble reason, an acknowledgement and belief that there be also Angels substantial, and permanent. But to believe they be in no place, that is to say, nowhere, that is to say, nothing, as they (though indirectly) say, that will have them Incorporeal, cannot be by Scripture evinced.⁶⁷

Essentially, he admits that he came to the subject fully intending to demythologise angels, and write-off all Biblical references to angels as dreams and visions. As far as

⁶⁶ Sec. 214

⁶⁷ Sec. 214

the Old Testament was concerned, this is easily done, however Hobbes felt compelled to bow to the words of Christ and the New Testament testimony about the reality of angels, as corporeal beings of some kind.

How does Bramhall respond to this in his *Catching of Leviathan*? First, he doesn't appear to have noted Hobbes' reversal of position. He simply looks at Hobbes' first assertion that the universe is comprised of only substantial bodies, and says:

By this doctrine, he makes not only the angels, but God Himself, to be nothing. ... If this that he say here be true - *that every part of the universe be a body, and whatsoever is not a body is nothing* - then, by his doctrine, if God be not a body, God is nothing; not an incorporeal spirit, but one of the idols of the brain, a mere nothing.⁶⁸

And here Bramhall's argument ends, and while he spreads the implications of this over a few pages, its essence is short and simple. If spirit does not exist then God cannot exist, and if spirit does exist, as God's existence clearly demonstrates, then why can't angels exist?

⁶⁸ IV: 535-6

(3) JEREMY TAYLOR

AND OTHER WRITERS OF THE 1640s AND 1650s

In sharp contrast to the prevailing rationalism, was Jeremy Taylor (1613-67). Whereas other thinkers were wrestling with the issues surrounding rationalistic thought, Taylor seems to have simply ignored it. Having no time for, and giving no ground to, the new forms of thinking of the time, Taylor remained immersed in the Mediaeval and Patristic traditions and the theology of the Church. Taylor was a theologian and devotional writer, ⁶⁹ and an Episcopalian and Arminian devoted to the Monarchy, as well as to the Anglican Church as the true Catholic Church. ⁷⁰ He was grounded in the Patristic and Mediaeval writers. ⁷¹ Stranks wrote that:

At all times he clung to the Apostolic Succession, he consistently and utterly repudiated the Calvinist themes of sin and predestination, and transubstantiation. ... Taylor discovered the Church which seemed ideal to him (was) the church of the first 3 or 4 centuries. ⁷²

It is no surprise that this primacy of the Fathers led to an angelology more varied and developed than others of his period.

⁶⁹ C.J. Stranks *The Life and Works of Jeremy Taylor* (London: SPCK, 1952) p.280

⁷⁰ Stranks p.281

⁷¹ H.R. MacAdoo *The Eucharistic Theology of Jeremy Taylor* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 1988) p.15 c.f. H.R. MacAdoo *Jeremy Taylor's Life of Christ* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 1994) pp.66-8 c.f. Stranks p.283

⁷² Stranks p.282-3

(A) The Minimalist Angelology of Henry Hammond.

Before looking at Taylor and other thinkers, besides the minimalist understanding of angels driven by rationalism and Calvinism, another methodology led to a minimalism – and it is exemplified by the thought of Henry Hammond. Hammond (1605-1660), a scholar and intellectual, who, while nominated to join the Westminster Assembly, didn't take his seat, and maintained support for the King and Episcopacy.

⁷³ Two things shaped Hammond's angelology, and theology in general – a high regard for the creeds, and practical and moral focus to his thought - and these provide the framework for a minimalist view.

In *On Fundamentals*, he shows his high regard for the ancient Creeds - specifically the Apostles', the Nicene and the Athanasian. ⁷⁴ It is through this framework that his theology is formed, and since none of the Creeds mentions angels, any Credal Christianity is unlikely to have a developed angelology. Hammond himself says that, for example, the Apostles' Creed was introduced to distinguish the orthodox from the heretical – specifically, Gnostics who worshipped angels instead of Christ. ⁷⁵ Indeed the Creed is so important, that Hammond says angels observe men as they recite it, which is an interesting development from those who saw angelic attendance at the Sacraments (Andrewes) or during preaching (Latimer). ⁷⁶

Secondly, Hammond had a very practical and moral emphasis which looked to demonstrate the reasonableness of religion, and this seems to have also led to little

⁷³ ODCC p.733

⁷⁴ Hammond (LACT) II:98ff: These are those Creeds mentioned in the 39 Articles.

⁷⁵ II:111-2

place for angels. This is shown in *On The Reasonableness of Christian Religion* (c.1649), which only mentions angels once in order to say that it doesn't matter who spoke out of the cloud in John 12:28-29, be it God direct or through an angel, *God spoke*.⁷⁷ Again, his *Practical Catechism* (1644) only mentions angels twice. The first time he says that Christ did not die for the angels, since to do so He would have had to assume an angelic nature.⁷⁸ The second says nothing more than angels worship God,⁷⁹ thus underlining that angels are not a part of practical religion.

Elsewhere, in his sermon on *Christ's Easy Yoke* (Matt. 11:23), we get a sense of Hammond's focus on human responsibility:

We have heard of an angel with a flaming sword at the gate of paradise, which our poetic fear and fantasies have transformed into a serpent at the door of Hesperides garden - that angel fallen and turned into a devil; ... and our cowardly sluggish augish fantasies have transplanted all these into Christendom, made them but emblems of Christ's *duri sermones*, the hard tasks, unmerciful burdens that he lays upon his disciples, yea and conjured up many spirits and fairies more, sad direful apparitions, and sent them out all a commanded party to repel or trash us, to intercept or to encumber our passage to Canaan, to pillage and despoil the soul of all Christian practice, of all that is duty in discipleship.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ II:697 c.f. Latimer II:85-6; Andrewes II:231

⁷⁷ II:10

⁷⁸ Catechism p.14

⁷⁹ Catechism p.189

The Garden of Hesperides refers to a Greek myth, where a garden with a tree of golden apples (which, when eaten, gave spiritual fulfilment), was guarded by beautiful singing virgins, and a dragon called Ladon. Hammond is saying that people were turning God's rightful expulsion from Eden into a hardship that excludes them from spiritual blessing. Thus, Hammond sees some as equating the work of the angels at the gate of Eden with that of the evil angels, and from there makes the point that Christians seem to blame spirits for their problems. While less clear about angels, he clearly had no time for demons. Hammond seems keen to promote a moral Christianity, one where man takes full responsibility for his actions with no recourse to blaming spirits, malign or otherwise, and this is confirmed further on:

(He is) thus answered in all his objections, (concerning the influence of spirits), confuted in all his fears, and prejudices, and excuses for libertinism, if he do (but) acknowledge the reasonableness of Christ's advice *take my yoke upon you*.⁸¹

There are no excuses for not living the proper Christian life, and, in fact, becoming like the angels is the ultimate example of Christ's easy yoke, since they do not have the burdens of the body:

It seems it is the angel's special advantage above us men, that they desire not the ταυτα παντα, the *all these things*, which is the luggage of the flesh about us.⁸²

⁸⁰ I:28-9

⁸¹ I:30

⁸² I:40

Hammond's unwillingness to affirm angelic influence is further advanced in a sermon on Jacob's Ladder, where he uses it strictly as a symbol:

God's signal promises of mercy and bounty to Jacob, emblematically resembled by the ladder from earth to heaven, God standing at the top of that ... and then the plain words of the emblem interpreted I am the Lord your God of Abraham.⁸³

Hammond sees no need to interpret it literally, in terms of the idea that angels come to men and assist them. One is simply encouraged to see it as a symbol of God blessing mankind,⁸⁴ and later Hammond again drives home that one is not to take it literally, since one must be right with God *before any messages from God, any descending angels, are to be expected thence*.⁸⁵ Thus the angel here is only a descending message from God, not a spiritual being conveying messages – an idea that, strangely, would have found sympathy with Hobbes.

Finally, in a sermon on loving too simply (Proverbs 1:22), Hammond uses the idea of the angel of light to indicate that what may appear to be best intentions, may well not be the best course of action, and in this context mentions Guardian Angels:

(I wish) every man to become his brother's keeper, and every man so tame as to love and interpret aright, entertain and embrace this keeper,

⁸³ I:86

⁸⁴ I:91

⁸⁵ I:93

this επιτροπος δαιμων, this guardian angel, as an angel indeed, as the only valuable friend indeed he hath under heaven.⁸⁶

Here again, Hammond appears to be demythologising angels, by making one who loves as a Christian loves, another's Guardian Angel.

Despite this, some references suggest Hammond held to angels as traditionally stated. For example, in *On Fundamentals*, he looks at how God worked on earth during Christ's life. The first being the Incarnation itself; second by the Spirit falling on Christ and His disciples; third by Christ's miracles; and last was by the ministry of angels, and that Christ's power was *discerned and adored by angels*.⁸⁷ It appears that Hammond only uses the demythologising when dealing with active angelic ministry in the here and now. He has no problem saying that vows are made in the presence of God and the angels,⁸⁸ or that angels tell man about God,⁸⁹ or that men stand before God and the angels,⁹⁰ but these are all views of ministry where angels are disconnected from men and observe from afar – in a way that parallels Perkins; focusing of angels in heaven. As soon as he is faced with current ministry he is on far less comfortable ground.

⁸⁶ I:333

⁸⁷ I:94 c.f. (II:380 c.f. 522);

⁸⁸ I:102

⁸⁹ I:143

⁹⁰ I:212

(B) Angels and Episcopacy.

The idea asserted in the 16th century that the angels of Revelation were not Guardian Angels of churches but symbols for church leaders, was an idea that was reasserted with vigour in the 17th century. However, the idea was developed to suit the pro-Episcopal cause in interesting ways. This line was later developed further by Taylor

To begin with, when talking of stars in an Epiphany sermon, Mark Frank (1613-64) said that the angels represent bishops (not simply leaders) who guide people towards Christ.⁹¹ Bramhall held that the angels signified bishops, and not angels of God,⁹² and Thorndike in his *Of the Government of Churches* (c.1640) supported the idea with a structured and historical argument,⁹³ as well as using the image of an angel with incense presenting prayers to God, as a picture of how a bishop should act.⁹⁴ Thorndike also developed another angle in *The Service of God at Religious Assemblies* (c. 1642) about the maintenance of the tradition of male-only church leadership. By using I Corinthians 11:10, he said the angels who demand respect are, in fact, the bishops of the church.⁹⁵ In *The Right of a Church in a Christian State* (c.1646), Thorndike also attacked the Presbyterians, making the point that the angel of the church is a singular angel, thus one person leads a church, not a group of elders (or similar), but that these are then brought together in a collective group in the wider

⁹¹ Frank (L.A.C.T.) I:295, 300

⁹² Bramhall (L.A.C.T.) II:69; III:470

⁹³ Thorndike (L.A.C.T.) I:19ff c.f. II:142

⁹⁴ Thorndike I:466 c.f. IV:393

⁹⁵ Thorndike I:152 c.f. 206, 812

church (synod), since an angel is *the name not of a presbytery but of a presbyter*.⁹⁶

A different angle was also developed by Ussher in the early 1640s. The subject matter of *The Power Commanded By God to a Prince, and the Obedience required of a Subject* is self-evident from the title, and what is interesting is his clear vision of a hierarchical universe, and the paralleling of angelic and earthly authorities.

So, to rise higher than household government (family), God in scripture is made the head of all principality and power, both of principalities and powers in heavenly places, whose ministry He uses in the invisible, and of principalities and powers here below whose labours he employs in the visible administration of the things of this world: unto both of which therefore he is pleased to impart as well his own name, as the title of his own children. ... For as angels, the chief princes invested with the glory and power of God are styled gods, and the sons of God, so the princes and judges of the earth frequently have the title of gods in Holy Writ, and in one place, of gods and sons of God both together *I have said Ye are gods, and all sons of the most High*. Which in the Chaldee paraphrast is thus rendered. *Behold, ye are reputed as angels, and all of you, as it were, angels of the most High*. Such affinity in this respect there is between these celestial spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation,

⁹⁶ Thorndike I:763 c.f. 464, 691

and these terrestrial angels of God, who are ministers to us for good, even God, ministers continually attending upon these very things.⁹⁷

This was the period when Ussher feared the abolition of the episcopacy, and needed to reaffirm strongly its legitimacy and the rightful hierarchical nature of society.⁹⁸

Ussher is saying that this is a graded universe where God works down through a hierarchical structure, and this structure is there for the good of society and mankind. Man, monarchy and Church are part of, and subject to, a wider God-ordained scheme. Man is to take heed of the angelic rôle and copy it – angels are obedient to the hierarchy (their Lord above them), not trying to be His equal, and servants to those below them. Aquinas made a similar point using Pseudo-Dionysius, and paralleled the angelic society with the human – both showing a hierarchical society under God.⁹⁹

An interesting angle to Ussher's quote is that, while he asserted a hierarchical church and society, at the same time he also played down the hierarchy that would place angels above men.

While these are clear developments from the 16th century, Jeremy Taylor takes the argument even further. In *Episcopacy Asserted* (1642), besides the normative Anglican position that the angels of the Revelation were bishops, and thus indicated a specifically Episcopal structure, Taylor wanted to, in opposition to Puritan claims, assert the episcopacy's sole Divine authority and non-negotiable nature. Taylor's position is that since Scripture called bishops angels, they demands a level of

⁹⁷ Ussher XI:268-9 (citing the Targum)

⁹⁸ Webster p.317

⁹⁹ S.T. 1a:CVIII:5-6 c.f. Ps. Dion.: E.H. III:4

eminency, honour and thus a hierarchy of forms, which history describes as Episcopal,¹⁰⁰ an idea he later built on:

An angel and a man communicate in those great excellencies of spiritual essence; they both have election and freedom of choice; they have will, and understanding, and memory, impresses of the divine image, and locomotion, and immortality. And these excellencies are, being precisely considered, of more real and eternal worth than the angelical manner of moving so in an instant, and those other forms and modalities of their knowledge and volition; and yet for these super-added parts of excellency the difference is no less than specifical. If we compare a bishop and a priest thus, what we call a difference in nature there will be a difference in order here, and of the same consideration.¹⁰¹

Taylor plays down the obvious differences between angels and bishops, while asserting the spiritual, authoritative and moral similarity, and from there demands respect for the order – i.e. hierarchy and episcopacy.

However, the symbolic picture also had a literal sense, and Taylor, using Origen, cites the existence of a specific Guardian Angel for a bishop:

¹⁰⁰ Ed. R. Heber *The Whole Works of Jeremy Taylor: Vols I-X* (London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1883): V:35-37

¹⁰¹ Taylor: V:108 c.f. X:64

The ancient fathers had a pious opinion, that besides the guardian angel which is appointed to the guard of every man, there is to every bishop a second angel appointed to him at consecration; and to this Origen alludes, saying that every bishopric has two angels, the one visible and the other invisible. This is a great matter, and shows what a precious thing that order and those persons are in the eyes of God; but then this also means, that we should live angelical lives, which the church rarely well expresses saying, that episcopal dignity is the state of perfection, and supposes the person to be so far advanced in holiness as to be in the state of confirmation of grace. But I shall say nothing of these things. ¹⁰²

This not only teaches Guardian Angels, but also a second *episcopal angel*, which bishops have. This *pious view* shows the importance of Episcopal *order*, not only to men, but also in the eyes of God since he appoints two angels to guard bishops! Going further, God speaks to man through both men and angels, so men are bound to their bishop as they may be to an angel, and should receive them with *fear and love*, and also to receive them as God, since a bishop stands in the place of God. ¹⁰³

¹⁰² Taylor: VIII:326-7 c.f. Origen: Hom. Luke 12:5-6

¹⁰³ Taylor: VIII:343

(C) Guardian Angels.

Seemingly uniquely among his contemporaries, Taylor, as previously shown, is clear about his belief in Guardian Angels. ¹⁰⁴ For example, while investigating the historical theology of baptism in *A Discourse On Baptism* (1652) he wrote:

It is more considerable, which is generally and piously believed by very many eminent persons in the church, that at our baptism God assigns an angel-guardian; for then the catechumen, being a servant and a brother of the Lord of angels, is sure not to want (i.e. lack) them *who pitch their tents round them that fear the Lord*; and that this guard and ministry is then appointed when themselves are admitted into the inheritance of the promises and their title to salvation, is hugely agreeable to the words of St. Paul, are they not *all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation*, where it appears that the title to the inheritance is the title to this ministry, and therefore must begin and end together. ¹⁰⁵

While Taylor is in line with Patristic writers such as Tertullian ¹⁰⁶ and Cyril of Jerusalem, ¹⁰⁷ who said angels were assigned at baptism, he is in opposition to Origen who favoured a assignment at birth. ¹⁰⁸ Although he gives an outward sign of caution,

¹⁰⁴ Although it may just be a literary quirk, Taylor never calls them *Guardian Angels*, but uses terms like *angel guardians*, or phrases such as *to angels who are our guardians*.

¹⁰⁵ Taylor: II:244

¹⁰⁶ Tert: On Baptism 6

¹⁰⁷ Cyril Jeru.: Protocatechism XV

¹⁰⁸ Origen: Comm. Matt. 13:27: See p.42-43 above.

saying that *I insist not on this, though it seems to me hugely probable*,¹⁰⁹ this *hugely probable* is defined in other areas of his writings to the edge of virtual certainty. For example, when Taylor talks of those who habitually sin, he says they:

Drive the good Spirit from him, by stripping him of the guards of angels ... (since)... the guard of angels is in scripture only promised to them that live godly. ... And the Hellenists used to call the angels *εγρηγορος*, watchmen, which custody is first designed and appointed for all when by baptism they give up their names to Christ and enter into the covenant of religion.¹¹⁰

So real is this ministry that even pagans realised angels existed and guarded people, and Taylor quotes both Seneca and the Stoics to this effect. Then, using Hebrews 1:14, Acts 12:15 and Exodus 22:20 (where God says he would send an angel before Israel *if* they were obedient to God). Taylor concludes:

If we provoke the Spirit of the Lord to anger by a course of evil living, either the angel will depart from us, or if he stays he will strike us.¹¹¹

Angels, if they do not leave their charge due to sin, will discipline them for it, and Taylor repeats this elsewhere, where, in terms similar to Donne, angels are called *God's conscience*, and so one should *grieve not the angel, lest he smite thee*,

¹⁰⁹ Taylor: II:244-5

¹¹⁰ Taylor: IV:271

¹¹¹ Taylor: IV:271-2 c.f. Origen: Comm. Matt. 14:21

do nothing against him, lest he foresake thee. ¹¹² Since angelic ministry is unseen to men, men have no comprehension of how many things (physical and spiritual, some fatal) their angel has saved them from, due to the intercession of Christ. However, there is a sense that this comes not only to Christians, but also to men before their conversion, since men do not know *how often God had sent out His exterminating angel, and our blessed Saviour by his intercession had obtained a reprieve that he might have the content of rejoicing at thy conversion and repentance.* ¹¹³

Angels are assigned at baptism, and are involved in bringing people to salvation, yet an added question is raised around confirmation:

It is no small addition to the honour of this ministration that some wise and good men have piously believed, that when baptised Christians are confirmed and solemnly blessed by the bishop, that then it is a special angel-guardian is appointed to keep their souls from the assaults of the spirits of darkness.

Notably the angel is assigned when baptism is confirmed and blessed by the bishop (yet another exaltation of the episcopacy) which suggests that simple baptism may not be sufficient for the assignment of an angel. Yet elsewhere he says:

Concerning which though I shall not interpose mine own opinion, yet this I say, that the piety of that supposition is not disagreeable to the

¹¹² Taylor: IX:113: See above pp.306ff

¹¹³ Taylor: IV:482

intention of this rite; for since by this the Holy Spirit of God is given, it is not unreasonably thought by them that other good spirits of God, the angels who are ministering spirits sent forth to minister to the good of them that shall be heirs of salvation, (are also given). ¹¹⁴

Taylor is cautious, but the intent is clear. Some may deny that angels can be assigned at baptism (which may be why he posited the idea of assignment at confirmation – when one’s faith is confirmed), but Taylor says that if the Spirit can be given, why not an angel also? There is nothing inherently within the rite that militates against the doctrine, and this is so clear to Taylor, that in his own devotional works, the rite of baptism includes the prayer:

(God who has) sent forth his angel ministers, appointing them to minister to the good of those who shall be heirs of salvation. He of his mercy and goodness send His holy angel to be the guardian of this child, and keep him from danger. ¹¹⁵

Taylor is clear this happens at baptism, so how does this square this with a ministry before conversion? Taylor never discusses it, but a probable solution is that before conversion one gets a generalised angelic protection and ministry, and then at baptism it becomes a specific Guardian Angel.

¹¹⁴ Taylor: V:613

¹¹⁵ Taylor: VIII:638

Taylor also seems to hold to a doctrine of Guardian Angels of nations, but is not clear on it.¹¹⁶ He mentions the struggle of the angels in Daniel 10:13, calling Michael the Guardian Angel of Israel, and the other the *tutelar angel of Persia*, and explains this by saying that they struggled not due to sin, but due to them both wanting to serve and love and be obedient as much as possible, so the zeal for their charges led to an impasse.

(D) Angelic Ministry.

Other areas of Taylor's thought also indicate a strong rooting in the Patristic tradition. For example, in *The Great Exemplar* (c.1649), he echoes Chrysostom saying:

Churches and Oratories are regions and courts of angels, and they are there, not only to minister to the saints, but also they possess them in the right of God. ... Holy David knew his addresses to God were in the presence of angels. ... God is in the midst of angels, and the angels in the midst of the holy place, and God in heaven is in the midst of that holy circle, as sure as he is in the midst of angels in the recesses of His sanctuary.¹¹⁷

To further demonstrate this, Taylor asks a whole series of rhetorical questions:

Were the rudiments of the law worthy of the attendance of angels, and are the memorials of the Gospels destitute of so brave a retinue? Did

¹¹⁶ Taylor: II:596

the beatified spirits wait upon the types, and do they decline the office at the ministry of substance? Is the nature of man made worse since the incarnation of the Son? Have the angels purchased an exemption from their ministry since Christ became our brother? We have little reason to think so ... (Chrysostom says) *The Church is not a shop of manufactures or merchandise, but the place of angels and archangels, the court of God, and the image or representation of heaven itself.* ¹¹⁸

Christ's ministry did not mean the ceasing of angelic ministry, and the presence of angels must lead men to take seriously their behaviour in Church. In this light, Taylor when talking of Communion, echoes Andrewes and explains why one should be right with God when taking it:

Let us take heed; for the angels are present in these mysteries to wait upon their Lord and ours: and it is a matter of great caution which was said by Vincentius Ferrerius, *The angels that assist at this sacrament would kill any unworthy communicant unless the divine mercy and long sufferance did cause them to forebear, a speedy execution, that the blessed sacrament might acquire its intention, and savour of life unto us.* ¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ Taylor: II:321, 727 c.f. Chrysostom: Hom. Heb. 15; Hooker: Ecc. Pol. V:25:2

¹¹⁸ Taylor: II:321 c.f. V:413

¹¹⁹ Taylor: VIII:228

Linking this to I Corinthians 11:29ff, Taylor says the judgement of unworthy communicants is enacted by angels present at the Eucharist, thus the importance of being aware of angels at Church. In addition, Taylor indicates an intercessory role, but appears to take the line of Ussher, and makes no extension into men asking angels for this intercession:

There are mysteries in our religion and in none else, that God's angels are ministering spirits for our good, and especially about the conveyances of our prayers.¹²⁰

Elsewhere, he also writes that *God hath appointed an angel to present the prayers of saints, and Christ makes intercession for us*,¹²¹ indicating a system where angels present their petitions to Christ, Who then intercedes on their behalf - it is not the angels who intercede direct. What is interesting here is, despite his clear Patristic sympathies, he maintains Ussher's line of a clear distinction between angels presenting prayers, and this then leading men to ask them to do so, as Forbes proposed.¹²² It also interesting that it is *an angel*, singular, not plural, which suggests that it is the work of one's Guardian Angel to intercede for their charge. (It is also of note that Taylor condemned the Gnostics who told followers to pray to angels as proper intermediaries.)¹²³

¹²⁰ Taylor: II:322

¹²¹ Taylor: IV:28

¹²² Forbes: I:143ff

¹²³ Taylor: IX:588

This would lead one to think that Taylor took a strong line on this issue, but elsewhere he is less strident. While other Anglican writers denounce with vehemence the worship or honour of angels, Taylor phrases his condemnation more mildly:

I note that those who worship angels and make religious addresses to them may see what privilege they themselves lose, and how they part with the honour of Christ, who in his nature relative to us is *exalted far above all thrones, and principalities, dominions*. I need not add lustre to this.¹²⁴

The privilege lost, the honour of Christ, doesn't appear to be the loss of their salvation. This basic theme arises elsewhere too, where Taylor doesn't clearly condemn it. After quoting Colossians 2:18, he writes:

It is plain that it can at least be no duty to worship angels, and therefore they that do cannot be blamed (since people in the Old Testament did so, and even St. John fell before an angel, and had to be told not to worship it); but if these words mean here as they do in all other places, there is at least a great danger to do it.¹²⁵

There is a danger, and a loss of honour, but no direct condemnation as is clear in Ussher and, as we shall see, in Herbert Thorndike's writings. Further to the line of thought taken by Forbes over angelic mediation, Thorndike seems to sit between him and Ussher in his assessment of the situation. His thought starts with the idea that the

¹²⁴ Taylor: IV:638

Church Militant has direct communion with the Church Triumphant, and this necessarily includes angels, and so we must respect them as ones who minister to men on God's behalf. ¹²⁶ The Church Triumphant prays for the Church militant, which leads him to see that angelic ministry, in light of Matt. 18:10, Luke 15:10 and Psalm 34:8, includes intercession to God:

Have (angels) not that affection for those, whom God so affects us to provide them such attendance, as to mediate with their desires to God the effect of that goodness, which He is so affectionate to bestow upon us? ¹²⁷

This idea of mediation is built upon, but Thorndike makes clear it must be viewed in the right context:

Whatsoever may be disputed, whether saints or angels in this regard may be counted mediators, intercessors or advocates between God and us will be mere contentions about words. ... He that knows the Godhead of Christ to be the ground, in consideration whereof the obedience of Christ is acceptable to God to this effect; and yet will needs say that saints or angels are our mediators, intercessors or advocates (should not) be excused of idolatry for his pains. ...

¹²⁵ Taylor: VI:489

¹²⁶ Thorndike: IV:761

¹²⁷ Thorndike IV:765

(However) he who says that the saints and angels pray for us, says not that we pray to saints or angels.¹²⁸

Thorndike sits between Ussher and Forbes, by saying that angels and saints do intercede for the Church on earth, and that man should be thankful for that. However, to count them as intercessors (and in Thorndike's sights is context of the Catholic Cultus) is idolatrous, and so he refuses to extend this to a position where men ask them to do so, since it is not sanctioned, and is not legitimate.¹²⁹

(E) Angels and Refuting Error.

Herbert Thorndike not only saw angelology as a way of understanding devotion and prayer in the Church, he also used angelology to challenge erroneous thought and heresy. His main focus of attack was the Socinians – rationalist anti-Trinitarians who denied the incarnation as an impossible conjunction of two natures, since the infinite couldn't join with the finite, and that two personalities couldn't inhabit one body.

In *The Covenant of Grace* (c.1650s), Thorndike addressed the Socinians' assertion that the apparitions of God in the Old Testament were angels, not theophanies, since angels cannot take on the nature of God,¹³⁰ and thus it could not have been Christ, the second person of the Trinity, appearing. From here the Socinians claimed that incarnation could not happen, and so Christ was not God, and the Trinity was false. Thorndike's reply is full and comprehensive.

¹²⁸ Thorndike IV:767-8

¹²⁹ Ussher III:420; c.f. Forbes II:213; See pp.343ff above.

¹³⁰ Thorndike III:209

First, he explains why angels were worshipped. It is not *prejudicial to that which the Fathers of the Church teach*,¹³¹ since these apparitions were prefaces to Christ's incarnation. In the theophanies Christ assumed an angelic nature, not a human nature, and he cites Gregory of Nazianzus to this effect – a position also held by Mark Frank who saw that Christ *visited in former times, by his proxies, his angels, the ushers of his glory*.¹³² Therefore, the fact the angels were worshipped demonstrates they were Christ.¹³³ Continuing, he rehearses the Socinian view that says angels could assume the bodies of men, with which they could talk to men and *that therefore, when they are called by the name and worshipped with the honour of the only true God. ... They represent (God) as ambassadors, and therefore are honoured with the honour due to the prince whom they represent*.¹³⁴ Thus it was an angel in the form of a man, who accepted the worship on behalf of God.

Thorndike's response is involved, and he makes clear that in the Old Testament angels are clearly shown to be such and men did not worship them or call them God. He concluded saying that *there is no angel in the Old Testament called by the proper name of God, or said to be worshipped by the prophets whom they deal with*.¹³⁵ And just as it was Christ in the angelic apparitions who spoke in God's name when worship was involved, so no angel in the New Testament, after the

¹³¹ Thorndike III:210

¹³² Frank I:146 (pre 1644)

¹³³ Thorndike III:210 c.f 334, 349.

¹³⁴ Thorndike III:210

¹³⁵ Thorndike III:213

incarnation, allowed themselves to be worshipped since none of them were Christ in angelic form.¹³⁶

I showed you before that those angels by whom God spoke to the prophets in the Old Testament, did not always speak in the person of God: and that in the New Testament the Word of God, having once assumed the flesh of Christ, though we read of divers apparitions of angels, yet we never read that the angel who speaks in God's name is called God, or honoured as God.¹³⁷

The other great threat, apart from heresy, was still Rome, and one still sees angels arising in arguments against Catholic doctrine and practice. In a *Sermon on the Annunciation*, we get Mark Frank's only extended discussion about angels. Similar to Forbes and other High Churchmen, Franks wanted a reformed Patristic and Catholic church, and so held a position that did not inherently reject mediaeval Catholic piety and doctrines, but desired a reformed and purified Catholicism. He starts with a criticism of Catholic piety surrounding Mary, and he is looking for a balance in, not a rejection of, the traditions concerning her. He begins by saying that Gabriel as a good example of how we should view Mary, since he gave *her no more than is her due, yet to be sure that though*.¹³⁸ Although angels come particularly when people fast (e.g. Daniel), Mary doesn't seem to fit this category,¹³⁹ so it is odd that an angel should come to a virgin's bedroom at midnight. However, angels are virgins, so Mary was in no trouble, and angels are always with virgins to carry their prayers to God,

¹³⁶ Thorndike III:213

¹³⁷ Thorndike III:248

¹³⁸ Frank II:34

and then bring blessings down from heaven to them.¹⁴⁰ The theme of men treating Mary as the angel did, is regular and persistent, but Frank admits that it is appropriate that an angel did undertake the task, as a holy one who stands before God, and he highlights the irony that it was angels who barred men from Eden, and it was an angel involved in the metaphorical return to Eden.¹⁴¹ It is appropriate that the angel declared Mary to be full of grace, and this also says something of the angel:

The truth of the angel's words, that she was full of grace, by the angel coming to her, that she was within, where *qui habeat abundantium gratiae*, says Hugo - they that are full of grace - keep in as much as they can, fearing the corrupt discourses and conversations of the world. (They do not speak idly since) ... they are fullest of grace and goodness. Nor do they care for the salutations or compliments of men (those) who are highly favoured of the Lord.¹⁴²

Frank's implication is that the fullness of grace in angels means that they do not seek the Cultus, and by extension, neither would Mary – being full of grace necessarily excludes them from that. The remainder of the sermon tries to define what it is to be *full of grace*, and links this to the sacramental setting, concluding with words similar to those of Lancelot Andrewes connecting angels to the Eucharist:

(God often blesses us) ... yet not to such at any time more fully than in the blessed Sacrament to which we are now a-going. ... There angels

¹³⁹ Frank II:35

¹⁴⁰ Frank I:35

¹⁴¹ Frank II:39 c.f. p146 c.f. Andrewes III:3-4

come to us on heavenly errands, and there our Lord is indeed with us: and we are blessed, and the angels hovering all about to peep into those holy mysteries, think us so, call us so. ¹⁴³

(F) Taylor Miscellany.

As seen, Taylor's position on a number of points is not in line with many of his contemporaries, and in other areas than those cited, his divergence in both method and breadth of interest is even more plain.

For example, and in clear contrast to Bramhall, Taylor discusses the angelic fall in *Great Exemplar* (c.1649) and writes:

The angels, who were more excellent spirits than human souls, were not comprehended and made safe within a covenant and provisions of repentance. Their first act of violation was their whole capacity of a blissful or a miserable eternity: they made their own sentence when they made their first election; and having such excellent knowledge, and no weakness to prejudice and trouble their choice, what they first did, was not capable of repentance; because they had at first, in their intuition and sight, all which could afterward bring them repentance. ¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² Frank II:41

¹⁴³ Franks II:51 c.f. Andrewes II:231; Chrysostom: Hom. Heb. XV

¹⁴⁴ Taylor: II:352

Angels were given just one choice, their first, to decide their future. Such was the magnitude of their knowledge and wisdom, and since they had within them the knowledge of God from the very first, like Donne, Taylor suggests that angels are without excuse.¹⁴⁵ They were provided with everything possible to bring them to God, with no weakness to hinder that choice, and if they chose something other than God, then nothing could lead them back. In this light Taylor compares this to men:

A weak man, who knows first by elements, and after long study learns a syllable, and in good time gets a word, cannot know all those things all those things which were sufficient or apt to determine his choice. ... The angels had full pre-emptory will, and a satisfied understanding, at first, and therefore were not to mend their first act by a second contradictory.¹⁴⁶

Man is weak and slow to learn, and cannot comprehend everything required to make a perfect choice, thus they have an excuse and God provides a solution to their problem. Angels do not have that excuse. They had a *pre-emptory will*, a will which understood the full consequences of their actions. They had a *satisfied understanding*, which means they had nothing more to learn, which is a different position from Donne who said that angels did lack understanding and did get things wrong, but not through sin, but ignorance.¹⁴⁷ With these views of will, knowledge

¹⁴⁵ See pp.283ff above.

¹⁴⁶ Taylor II:352

¹⁴⁷ Donne V:426

and understanding, Taylor can rightly say that angels are without excuse and can therefore never be redeemed.¹⁴⁸

Another fascinating reference Taylor makes is in a letter written in May 1658 to John Evelyn, which was to thank him for looking after Taylor's business. As an aside Taylor exhorts Evelyn in his faith and writes that:

In religion every new degree of love is a new appetite; as in the schooles we say, every single angel makes a species, and differs more than numerically from an angel of the same order.¹⁴⁹

Taylor clearly recognised the scholastic exposition around angelic hierarchies, species, and accepted a form of ordering. Elsewhere, Taylor comments on Jude 8 and makes a fascinating remark about angelic orders:

The sin of rebellion, though it be a spiritual sin, and imitable by devils, yet it is of that disorder, unreasonableness, and impossibility amongst intelligent spirits, that they never murmured or mutinied in their lower stations against their superiors. Nay, the good angels of the inferior order durst not revile a devil of a higher order. This consideration, which I reckon to be most pressing in the discourses of reason, and obliging next to the necessity of a divine precept, we learn from St. Jude ... (quotes Jude 8).

¹⁴⁸ Taylor: II:717

This makes two things clear. First that Taylor held to a hierarchical order in heaven, but not necessarily a Dionysian scheme, and second, he appears to hold to the belief that orders were initiated before the angelic fall, not afterwards, and were maintained by both fallen and confirmed angels, which was not the consensus of opinion in Catholic thought. (For example, both Aquinas and Lombard see orders as a post-fall state, and demons do not have hierarchies.)¹⁵⁰

Another aside which talks of angelic existence in heaven, is based around the Jews' question regarding marriage in Luke 20:36. He says:

(Men will become like) to the condition of angels, amongst whom there is no difference of sex, no cognations, no genealogies or derivation from one another.¹⁵¹

The difference in emphasis from Andrewes and Donne is clear, with Andrewes citing it as an issue of nature, and Donne as an issue of being in heaven and not on earth, with Taylor as an issue of progeny and genealogy.

Finally, it has already been noted that Taylor was not averse to citing a range of sources and Fathers, and this is paralleled in his willingness to use the Apocrypha. For example, Taylor uses Raphael's words to Tobias that *Alms deliver from death*, in an authoritative way.¹⁵² Again, in a sermon called *The Marriage Ring*, he uses a very mediaeval image when he uses the marriage of Tobias and Sarah in Tobit 5-8. This

¹⁴⁹ Taylor I: *Life of Jeremy Taylor* p. lxxvii c.f. Aquinas: S.T. 1a:L:4

¹⁵⁰ Aquinas: S.T. 1a:CIX; Lombard: Sent. II:IX:5

¹⁵¹ Taylor II:604

story is the one used in the Sarum Missal.¹⁵³ It talks of when an angel arranges the marriage, and then Raphael protecting them from demonic attack on their wedding night. This was a favoured illustration of a happy, blessed and long marriage.¹⁵⁴ Raphael again pops up when Taylor mentions the meaning of names. Raphael called himself Azarias, which means *Son of the Lord's cloud*:

(Which means) that he was sent from the Lord in a cloud or disguise to be an aid and a blessing to that religious family.¹⁵⁵

One final, and bizarre, reference is to an angel called Raziel. Having no point of reference even in the Apocrypha, Raziel is cited in esoteric Talmudic sources. His name means personification of divine wisdom, and traditions around him reflect that name – especially where he is cited as declaring God's truth from the top of Mount Horeb. For example, when Moses ascended into heaven to receive the law, he met Raziel, and it is Raziel who heard mysteries from behind the divine curtain and gave them to Elijah. Even more esoteric is the tradition which said that three days after Adam was expelled from Eden, Raziel came to him and gave him a magical book containing all the mysteries of creation (a strongly Jewish and sycretistic book with pagan elements) – some traditions adapt this to say that Raziel was actually Uriel, and he gave Adam the book while he was still in Eden. This book, called *Sefer Raziel*, apart from being cited by a few German Kabbalists in the 13th century, wasn't

¹⁵² Taylor III:303 c.f. VIII:120

¹⁵³ Order of Matrimony : Sarum Missal: II:151-3

¹⁵⁴ Taylor: IV:210

¹⁵⁵ Taylor: X:128

published until 1701 in Amsterdam.¹⁵⁶ Therefore, quite how Taylor gained his information is unclear, but clearly he had knowledge of it.

What Taylor writes is in the context of obedience to one's leaders, and how if they are not good leaders, one must pray to God for a solution:

Even in thy conscience, in the secrets of thy heart speak not evil of the king, and in the closets of the chambers of thy house speak not evil of the wise man; for the angel Raziel does every day from heaven cry out upon the mount of Horeb, and his voice passes into all the world.¹⁵⁷

It appears that Taylor held to the tradition of Raziel being one who dispensed divine wisdom, and, again in terms reminiscent of Donne, in this context seemingly the angel announced the actions and sins of individual men too.¹⁵⁸

(4) The Westminster Assembly (1643-6)

Freed from the restrictions of the Crown and Laud, the Westminster Assembly was gathered from Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Baptists to form a new polity for the English Church in terms of both theology and ecclesiology.¹⁵⁹ The mechanics of this process need not bother us here, but the outcome does. Focusing on the unique authority of the Bible and the essential elements of the Christian faith,¹⁶⁰ the

¹⁵⁶ *Encyclopaedia Judaica*: Vol 13 (Jerusalem: Keter Pub. House, 1971) pp.1591-2

¹⁵⁷ Taylor: X:186

¹⁵⁸ See above pp. 306ff; p.417

¹⁵⁹ R.S. Paul *The Assembly of the Lord* (T&T Clark, 1985) p.3

¹⁶⁰ Paul p.523, 527

Assembly came up with a classic statement of the Reformed faith in the form of a Confession of Faith, a Shorter Catechism and a Longer Catechism, as Chadwick says:

It contains a well phrased and uncompromising statement of Calvinist divinity, and soon became the classic exposition of English and Scottish Presbyterian doctrine.¹⁶¹

It is very noticeable in this light that the angelology of the Westminster Confession, while displaying those two Calvinist traits of minimalism and anti-Catholicism, is also heavily election and predestination focused – the two areas banned from discussion under Laud. Thomas Goodwin was there,¹⁶² and the angelology parallels the line shown in his works written from outside the Church of England in the early 1640s.

That angels are creations of God is clearly taught:

God created all the angels. Spirits, immortal, holy, excelling in knowledge, mighty in power, to execute his commandments and praise his name, yet subject to change.¹⁶³

That they were *subject to change*, appears to mean, in this context, that they could fall into sin – a pre-confirmation state. In terms of the predestined choice of angels and

¹⁶¹ O. Chadwick *The Reformation* (Pelican, 1964) p.236; c.f. Paul p.3

¹⁶² Paul p.555; W.M. Hetherington *The History of the Westminster Assembly of Divines* (Still Waters Revival Books, Canada, 1991) p.112

¹⁶³ Larger Catechism: Q16

demons, and the confirmation of both in their respective states, there are three references:

By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestined unto everlasting life, and some to everlasting death.¹⁶⁴

These angels and men, thus predestined and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number is certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or decreased.¹⁶⁵

God by His power permitted some of the angels wilfully and irrevocably to fall under sin and damnation, limiting and ordering that, and all their sins, to his own glory; and established the rest in holiness and happiness, employing them all at his pleasure in the administrations of his power, mercy and justice.¹⁶⁶

The Calvinist theology of double predestination as applied to men is clearly applied here to angels also – a position that Arminians like Hammond could not accept. Why, he asked, should God create angels simply to damn them *for nothing*.¹⁶⁷ However, what is lacking in the Confession and the Catechisms is any discussion of exactly what the sin of the angels was. While the last quote indicates that their fall

¹⁶⁴ Confession of Faith: Chpt. III:3

¹⁶⁵ Confession of Faith: Chpt. III:5

¹⁶⁶ L.C.: Q19

¹⁶⁷ Hammond II:157

was of their own doing, the only clue as to the identity of the sin is a footnote which said that Satan was *a murderer from the beginning, who did not abide in the truth.* ¹⁶⁸

The anti-Catholicism is plain in two sections, but what is noticeable that while earlier Calvinists had also attacked the concept of the hierarchies, this does not and it criticises the cultus alone. The Longer Catechism says that sins that break the 1st Commandment are *praying or giving any religious worship to saints, angels or any other creature.* ¹⁶⁹ The Confession echoes this saying *Religious Worship is not given to angels, saints or any creature ...(and there is)... no mediator except Christ alone.* ¹⁷⁰ No development beyond this is seen as necessary.

¹⁶⁸ Footnote on L.C.: Q19 - citing John 8:44.

¹⁶⁹ L.C.: Q105

¹⁷⁰ Conf. Faith: Chpt. XXI:2

Chapter 10

BALANCE OR COMPROMISE? THE ANGELOLOGY OF JOSEPH HALL.

Introduction.

While the Protectorate ruled England in the 1650s, many who were pro-Episcopacy and supported the use of the Prayer Book, either kept a low profile, or went into exile. In terms of angelology, while we have seen hints of what was written during the 1650s in the last chapter, the main thinker during this period was Joseph Hall (1574-1656). He was a widely read Calvinist, who looked to balance his Calvinism with both his scholarship and the prevailing rationalism, and it was he who produced the last major exposition on angelology of our period.

Hall was bishop of Exeter and then Norwich, serving under both James I and Charles I. He had a life-long admiration for James, regularly preaching before him. This led to James actively advancing Hall's career, even selecting him to represent the Crown at the Synod of Dort,¹ where he was James's *loyal and obedient servus ecclesiae*.² Cited as an *Anglican Divine, formative in modern Anglicanism*,³ Hall, like Ussher, was the odd combination of a Calvinist and Episcopalian,⁴ and again, as with Ussher, he read more widely than just continental Calvinism. Avis writes that Hall

¹ F. L. Huntley *Bishop Joseph Hall : A Biographical and Critical Study* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1979) pp.27-29, pp.51-52, pp.131-32, .

² Huntley p.104

³ Ed. S. Sykes & J. Booty *The Study of Anglicanism* (London: SPCK, 1988) p.164

⁴ P. Avis *Anglicanism and the Christian Church* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989) p.83

*deployed the Reformers and their writings, treating them even-handedly along with the medieval schoolmen and the fathers,*⁵ and in his later years his favourite preacher was John Donne.⁶ However, his essential Calvinism is without question. Being a clear opponent of Laud, Kinloch describes him as an *out-and-out Calvinist, who lived and died a Calvinist*, upholding a clear double-predestinarian soteriology for men.⁷ Huntley writes that:

Joseph Hall was Calvinist who never left the Anglican Church. As an Anglican he was devoted to the Bible, the tradition of the Apostolic Church, the Book of Common Prayer and *reason*.⁸

Alongside this eclectic mix of Calvinism, reason and tradition (Patristic, Mediaeval and contemporary), was Hall's desire for theology to have a practical and godly outcome. He was concerned that *intellect, or correct doctrine, was being emphasized while the affections, and thus the modification of human behaviour in the light of truth were being neglected or ignored*.⁹ He worked in the light of religious experience in the form of reformed lives, thus rejecting both dry scholarship and excessive rationalism. Doctrine that had no practical effect was of little use. This divergence from the continental Calvinist norm in ecclesiology and methodology, is also shown in his angelology, and what is also very noticeable is how his exposition differs from that of the Westminster Confession of only 4-5 years

⁵ Avis p.83

⁶ T.F. Kinloch *The Life and Works of Joseph Hall* (London: Staples Press Ltd, 1951) p.38

⁷ Kinloch pp.31-3, 59, 65, 94, 135 c.f. Huntley p.109

⁸ Huntley p.88 (my italics)

⁹ Booty p.167

before. While it is true that, as a Confession, it is a piece of literature of a different nature to Hall's work, the whole tenor of minimalism, strong references against Catholic practice, and a clear double-predestinarian soteriology, as will be seen, shows up by contrast how Hall's approach to angelology was radically divergent from mainstream Calvinism.

The Invisible World (1651).

The Invisible World, or to give it its full title *The Invisible World Discovered to Spiritual Eyes and reduced to Useful Meditation*,¹⁰ (note the word *useful*) is a work of three parts in which Hall examines God and the Angels (Book I), Man's Soul (Book II), and Evil Angels (Book III). It examines angels and their place in cosmology and Creation, and by doing so clearly marks his position in the prevailing milieu. On the cusp of the Enlightenment, Hall was still of the old school:

Hall's meditation on the Invisible World is not so much a devotional work - though it contains many devotional passages - as a treatise on angelology, as understood in Elizabethan times. If it does nothing else, it serves to remind us who live after eighteenth century rationalism and nineteenth century biblical criticism have done their work, after the views of twentieth century scientists in regard to the nature and constitution have revolutionised the cosmic outlook of all

¹⁰ Found in Vol. VIII of *The Works of Joseph Hall (Vols: I - XII)* (Oxford: D.A. Talboys, 1837)

educated men, how far removed the Elizabethan world is from our own, how near in spite of the Reformation and Renaissance were many of its philosophical and theological views to those of the Middle Ages.¹¹

With a mediaeval background firmly underpinning him, but living in a period when people such as Hobbes strongly challenged it, Hall often has to justify positions which only forty or fifty years earlier had been taken for granted. For example, he starts Book I with a defence of the fact that there actually is an invisible realm unseen to men, but recognises that it is not so clear that it can be easily observed. Unlike Hooker, Salkeld and Donne, for example, Hall must first demonstrate the existence of the unseen, and a feature of his approach is to assert both that the spiritual realm is clearly obvious to those who truly look, and yet that only the truly spiritual person can really see it. Thus Hall begins by saying:

Wherefore serves the eye of sense but to view the goodly frame and furniture of creation? Wherefore serves the eye of reason and faith, but to see that lively and invisible power, which governs and comprehends it?¹²

Human eyes can see the visible physical realm, but only reason and faith together can observe the invisible spiritual realm, and this emphasis on reason joined with faith

¹¹ Kinloch p.104

¹² VIII:353

crops up often. Reason can observe the spiritual realm if one is *endued with reason and regenerate, enlightened by faith*.¹³ Only the regenerate and enlightened mind can comprehend this realm. Those who deny the invisible realm are *nearest, therefore to the beasts who suffer themselves to be so altogether led by their senses, as to believe nothing, but what is suggested by that purblind and unfaithful informer*. For those from the mediaeval mindset the whole of cosmology, angels included, was accessible and understandable, even to non-Christians, through reasonable observation. However, Hall has modified this, saying that one needs faith and the regeneration that enlightens the mind. Those who are not regenerated can gain some insight, but not into the deeper and hidden workings of the universe. He condemns those in Hobbes's mould (or perhaps Hobbes directly) who, in the tradition of the Saducees, denied the existence of angels, and says:

It was bad enough. that they denied the immortality and constant subsistence of those angelical, immaterial substances: an opinion long since hissed out, not of the school of Christianity only, but of the very stalls and sties of the most brutish Paganism.

For Hall, the idea of a universe without spirits and souls is inconceivable, since it is self-evident for anyone who looks. Even ignorant Pagans know the spiritual realm exists, since it is clear that something must animate the physical realm – invisible causes.

¹³ VIII:354

Surely all that know they have souls, must needs believe a world of spirits, which they see not; if from no other ground, yet out of that analogy ...(where)... Man consists of an outward visible body; and an inward spiritual soul which give life and motion to that organical frame.

However, Hall now qualifies what he has just said, and says that this *world of spirits* not completely self-evident, since needs an *illuminated soul (which) looks about him with no other than St. Paul's eyes* to see it. ¹⁴ Thus we see two levels of understanding – *brutish paganism* can understand that a spiritual realm exists, but one needs the illuminated soul to gain an understanding of it.

Once Hall has established there is a spiritual realm to consider, Section II of Book I looks at its make up. He says that the spiritual beings are separate from the physical beings since *those pure and simple natures are incapable of mingling with gross immaterial substances; and the God of Order has given them their own separate essences.* ¹⁵ The make up of the spiritual realm is four-fold. First comes God Himself, who is *more than a world of worlds*. Next to God are the angels:

Those Immaterial and Invisible Powers, who receive their original and continuance, their nature and offices from that King of Glory. ...

¹⁴ VIII:354-5

¹⁵ VIII:355

(and)... each one whereof is so mighty, as to make a world of power alone.¹⁶

As with Hooker, angels are placed within a wider society under God's law, since they are *perfectly united in one celestial policy, (and) their entire communion, under the laws and government of their sovereign Creator, makes them a complete world of spirits, invisibly living and moving both within and above this visible globe of the material world.*¹⁷ The invisibility in living and moving is a key point in Hall's exposition, and arises often. The third and fourth groups in the spiritual realm are the Souls of the Just now living in their immortal bodies, and the demons with the Reprobate Souls. All four groups are *ranked in so many regions of one immaterial and intelligible world.*

Having provided the wider picture, Hall now narrows the focus:

But, O ye blessed, immortal, glorious Spirits, who can know you, but he that is of you? Alas, this soul of mine knows not itself: how shall it know you? *Surely, no more can our minds conceive of you, than our eyes can see you:* only, since he, that made you, hath given us a little glimpse of your subdivine natures, properties, operations, let us weakly, as we may, *recount them to his glory in yours.*

¹⁶ VIII:355-6

¹⁷ VIII:356 c.f. Hooker: Ecc. Pol. I:16:4

Only angels (and God, naturally) can know angels. Men cannot see nor comprehend them because God has not given them the capacity to do so fully, but enough to be thankful for them, and from here Section III begins with a confession from Hall, which asks *the good Lord forgive me for forgetting the presence of his holy angels, and filling mine eyes with other objects.*¹⁸ Ignoring angels seems to be a common problem and he feels he needs to be repentant about it, as he has *been slack in returning praise to my God, for the continual assistance of those blessed and beneficant spirits, which have ever graciously attended me, without intermission, from the first hour of my conception to this present moment.*

Further than Tertullian, Hall says that angels attend people not only from birth, but in the very womb.¹⁹ Their roles include *tutelage and protection*, and to *present my poor soul (to) her final glory*, since they are *my ever-present guardians*. At this stage he doesn't introduce Guardian Angels. but starts looking at the number of angels and mentions a range of theories (including ones from Pseudo-Dionysius and Gregory the Great) about how to calculate their number – none of which he gives credence.²⁰ After this detour, he returns to angelic protection, and starts to discuss Guardian Angels. After exclaiming *how safe we are, under so many and so mighty protectors!*,²¹ he writes:

¹⁸ VIII:357

¹⁹ Tert : De Bap. 6

²⁰ VIII:358

²¹ VIII:359

It might be perhaps well meant, and is confessed to be seconded with much reverend antiquity, the conceit, that each man hath a special angel designed for his custody.

Unlike Taylor who saw it as an ancient and piously held belief,²² Hall cites it a well meant but ancient conceit. He rejects speculation which tries to define whether protection is given by a specific angel, or a group of angels, saying only that *according to several relations, each one hath many spiritual keepers.*²³ Even if Guardian Angels did exist, men have such an array of angels protecting them, that specific details are almost academic, since one is as good as a million to protect men from *the gates of hell*. With a nod to Calvinist influences, the protection is real – the mechanics of it are unimportant. He ends with a eulogy, exhorting right behaviour due to angelic protection:

O ye blessed spirits, ye are ever by me, ever with me, ever about me :
I do good as I see you; for I know you to be here;
I reverence your glorious persons; I bless God for you;
I walk awfully, because I am ever in your eyes;
*I walk confidently, because I am ever in your hands.*²⁴

²² Taylor VIII:326-7; II:244: See above pp.416ff

²³ VIII:359

²⁴ VIII:359-360 – my italics.

This eulogy leads Hall to admit that Muslim angelology and reverence for angels puts Christians to shame, and so, in recompense, he will take the attitude that *next to my God and Saviour, I shall ever place my greatest comfort and confidence (in angels)* - an approach that would have clearly resonated with Luther more than Calvin.

Section IV deals with the power and ability of angels, and Hall uses Aquinas to say that *one angel is of such power, that he was able to govern all the corporeal creatures of the world.* ²⁵ While this should not lead one to believe angels created the universe, one can wonder what *God uses their mighty powers to do.* Hall decides that God uses them to do his will since *they are the nearest, both in nature and place to (God), and so it is most proper for them to participate in most of his power, and to exercise it in obedience to his sovereignty.* ²⁶ Angels as God's immediate subordinates, are the means *whereby he executeth his illimited power, in and upon this whole created world.* Not for the last time, angels are cited as intermediate causes used by God, over and against Hobbes' direct sovereignty which bypassed angels. It should therefore comfort men that they are *invincibly guarded* from the powers of darkness by angels. For, what is an angel without God? Powerful but still subject to Him. Yet an angel *with* God is awesomely powerful, and for this reason the demons will never defeat the angels of God. ²⁷

²⁵ VIII:360

²⁶ VIII:361

²⁷ VIII:361

Section V looks at the *Knowledge of Angels*, and building on his previous section, Hall states that angels are effective in what they do because they are not only immensely powerful, but they ally this with immense knowledge. Trying to identify the scale of their knowledge leads him towards a position similar to that of Donne.²⁸ First, it seems to be a knowledge built on an ability to see all things in the universe, since *what is there in this whole compass of the large universe, that is hid from their eyes?*²⁹ Yet, Hall qualifies this by saying that *only the closet of man's heart is locked up from them; as reserved solely to their Maker*. This places the same limits as Donne had cited, but Hall adds a further qualification *that they can, by some insensible chinks in those secret notifications which fall from us, look into them also. All other things, whether secrets of nature, or closest counsels or events, are as open to their sight, as the most visible objects are to ours*. Angels can see into almost everything, including men's hearts; their clarity of vision is far beyond that of men since *they do not, as we mortals are wont, look through the horny spectacle of senses; or understand by the mediation of phantasms: but rather, as clear mirrors, they receive at once the full representation of all intelligible things; having besides that connatural light which is universally in them all, certain special illumination from the Father of lights*.³⁰ Besides taking Donne's line that God gives extra illumination when they cannot naturally know what they need, Hall also uses an idea from Aquinas who held that angels perceive the essence of a substance or object (*full representation of all intelligible things*) and do

²⁸ See pp.305ff above.

²⁹ VIII:362

³⁰ VIII:362

not judge it, so they cannot be in error.³¹ Thus angels know things both in themselves, and in their *inward and immediate causes*, and how these relate to the First and Universal Cause – God.³² Angels can perceive things in their essence, and see things not only as they are now, but also what they are in the purposes of God. Angels forever observe both God and creation at the same time, and this dual vision means that Satan can never surprise the elect saints, and from this their blessed state is, at least in part, due to their protection of men:

Tutelar Spirits (Angels) ... always enjoy the beatifical vision of their Maker, so their eyes are never far off His little ones: their blessedness is no more separable from men's safety, than from God's blessedness.³³

Since their blessedness is linked to their role in maintaining men's safety, in Section VI, *The Employments and Operations of Angels*, Hall considers the question, *What do angels do?* He recognises that even though they generally operate unseen, God has explained much in the Bible, so answering this question is possible.³⁴ The majority of the section simply describes various Biblical events, some being clearly angelic activity, others being less obvious, in that men cannot always discern that who they are talking to are angels, and sometimes angels are simply invisible to the human eye.

³¹ S.T. 1a:58

³² VIII:362

³³ VIII:363

³⁴ VIII:363

Angels are also involved in healing and the guiding of men, to a point where Hall can claim:

God's angels have been our secret physicians. Have we had instinctive intimations of the death of some absent friends, which no human intelligence hath bidden us suspect? Who, but our angels, hath wrought it? ³⁵

A parallel to the mediaeval tradition of Raphael may be implied here, ³⁶ with Hall attributing healing to an angel. Also, angels communicate with men through a form of intuition – perhaps what other writers may have called a *stirring* – which is a far more tentative way of citing angelic interaction, as opposed to visions, dreams and apparitions. Angels also specifically help children, and Hall makes this clear:

I see no reason to dislike that observation of Gerson, *Whence is it, saith he, that little children are conserved from so many perils of their infancy; fire, water, falls, suffocation, but by the agency of angels?* ³⁷

(Hall's use of Gerson here, and throughout this book, is very interesting. Gerson (1363-1429) was conciliarist and spiritual writer who worked for church reform and reunion *by renewal of the spirit by prayer.* ³⁸ His teaching was mystical and

³⁵ VIII:364 c.f. II:455

³⁶ c.f. Sarum II:222ff

³⁷ Ibid. c.f. IV:158:

³⁸ ODCC p.669

heavily influenced by Augustine and Pseudo Dionysius.³⁹ A key feature of it was, in line with Hall, that theology should have a practical and spiritual outcome. He disliked the dry scholastic teaching that students received, as he felt this hindered reform and renewal. Pascoe said:

(Reform and renewal) is achieved by freeing the theologian from vain and curious speculation and directing him to the true content of the Scriptures.⁴⁰

From here, Gerson saw that the goal of Christian study was applicable and experiential knowledge, since *such knowledge moves the heart toward love and charity as well as enlightening the mind.*⁴¹ Hall's focus on practical outcomes of theology in reformed lives parallels Gerson's attitude closely, thus again we see that for Hall, a knowledge of angels is useful because it is practical and helpful in one's walk with God and life in general.⁴²)

In direct opposition to Hobbes, Hall strongly asserts angels as intermediate causes in nature. The stance he takes is that causes specifically demonstrate angelic existence and activity, since it is wrong to ascribe various events to just normal causes. For

³⁹ *It would be difficult to find anywhere ideas that better sum up the whole tradition of Christian Spirituality than what we find in the pages (of Gerson).* J.L. Connolly *Jean Gerson: Reformer and Mystic* (London: Herder Book Co., 1928) Preface: p. x

⁴⁰ L.B. Pascoe *Jean Gerson: The Principles Of Church Reform* (Leiden: Brill, 1973) p.109

⁴¹ S.D. Foutz *On The Life And Mystical Theology Of Jean Gerson* (Quodlibet: On Line Journal: www.quodlibet.net/gerson) p. 4

⁴² See above p.439

example, when Job's son's house fell down, it was an angel; or when a plague ravaged Israel, this too was an angel:

Human reason is apt to be injuriously saucy, in ascribing those things to an ordinary course of natural causes, which the God of Nature doth by supernatural agents.⁴³

However, it should be said that despite Hall's admonition, his use of Scripture is far from convincing - for example, to attribute the action of Job 1:18-19 to angels, has no clear basis in the text. Still, Hall pursues this line, saying that earthquakes, hurricanes, tempests, and *fiery apparitions*, may be caused by angels or demons:

For, however, there be natural causes given of the usual events of this kind; yet nothing hinders, but that the Almighty, for the manifestation of his power and justice, may set spirits, whether good or evil, on work to do the same things sometimes with more state and magnificence of horror.

Men discern angelic action by the fact that the events are patently out of the ordinary:

Neither need there be any great difficulty in discerning when such like events run in natural course, and when spirits are actors in them: the manner of their operation, the occasion and effects of them, shall soon

⁴³ VIII:365

descry them *to a judicious eye* : for when we shall find, that they do manifestly deviate from the from the road of nature, and work above the power of secondary causes, it is easy to determine them to be of a higher efficiency.⁴⁴

Hall asserts that one can observe events in nature and deduce angels, yet only to the *judicious eye* are the details clear. This suggests that natural theology can deduce the spiritual realm to a limited extent, but the full picture is gained by seeing natural theology through the glasses of revealed theology and understanding the chain of causes that God has put in place. Hall's last point reasserts the idea that angels guide men by stirring the instinct – an internalised, unseen cause:

If a man by some strong instinct be warned to change that lodging, which he constantly held for some years; and finds his wonted sleeping place that night crushed, with the unexpected fall of an unsuspected contignation; ... if a man, without all observations of physical criticisms, shall receive and give intelligence, many days before, what hour shall be his last : to what cause can we attribute these, but to our attending angels?⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Ibid (my italics) c.f. II:316

⁴⁵ VIII:366

Hall is *convinced that their unfelt hands are in many occurrences of my life*,⁴⁶ and while it may be *unfelt*, he is clearly citing an angelic ministry in terms that fix them within a system of causes that flow from God down to men and his world, thus demanding from Hobbesian thought the need to recognise intermediate causes.

Section VII deals directly with the Dionysian heritage of the mediaeval church, and Hall begins by admitting orders or degrees exist within heaven,⁴⁷ and from here envisages that creation (seen and unseen) is inherently hierarchical:

Equality hath no place, either in earth or in hell: we have no reason to seek it in heaven. (St. Paul was) rapt into the third heaven (and) can tell us Thrones, Dominions, Prinicipalities, Angels and Archangels, in that realm of blessedness. We cannot be so simple, as to think these to be but one class of spirits; doubtless, they are distinctions of divers orders : but what their several ranks, offices, employments are, he were not more wise that could tell, than he is bold that dare speak.⁴⁸

It is worth noting, again, Hall's use of Scripture - St. Paul's vision in II Corinthians 12 doesn't mentions angels, and Hall is interpolating ideas from Colossians 1:15ff and Ephesians 1:21 to say that Paul saw these ranks during this vision. Paul then used that (incomplete) knowledge in later writings. Hall rehearses the various ideas about the

⁴⁶ VIII:366

⁴⁷ VIII:366-7

⁴⁸ VIII:367

ranking in heaven, and rejects it all as idle, arrogant, speculation.⁴⁹ However, his criticisms are of the speculative details behind the proposed hierarchies, not that the hierarchies exist per se. *There are* hierarchies, but Hall does not know enough to expound them, and is content, along with Calvin, to remain *learnedly ignorant and incuriously devout*.⁵⁰

Section VIII discusses *The Apparitions of Angels*, and Hall struggles to maintain a tension between the demands of Scripture and the demands of Reason. Hall asserts the importance of knowing about angels, since there is no point in confessing angelic existence if they are then ignored.⁵¹ Angels impact on human lives and affairs, and so Hall demands they be investigated since man must know *what Mutual Communion there is or may be, betwixt these blessed spirits and us*.

First, it is true that angels appear to men, and Hall labours the point - angels *really do* appear to men. These appearances were in the Biblical Times,⁵² the Patristic period,⁵³ and even in the Reformation period, with an appearance to Philip Melancthon that was, and Hall makes a point of this, verified with *eye witness reports*.⁵⁴ However, Hall admits that many appearances are *pretended*,⁵⁵ and lists a host of people who said they had encounters with angels, saying that *these and a thousand more of*

⁴⁹ VIII:368

⁵⁰ VIII:369 : c.f. Calvin: Inst. I:XIV:4

⁵¹ VIII:369

⁵² VIII:370 c.f. IV:279

⁵³ VIII:371

⁵⁴ VIII:371

⁵⁵ VIII:369

the same brain, find no more belief in me. ⁵⁶ From here, Hall confesses that *the older the Church grew, the more rare was the use of these apparitions, as of other miraculous actions and events.* ⁵⁷ Hall is aware, though, that this looks like a diminution of God's action and providence toward His Creation, and defends it by saying that God has simply changed how He works – He has not stopped working altogether:

The arm of the Lord is (not) shortened, or His care and love to his beloved ones (one) whit abated; but, for that his Church is now, in this long process of time, settled, through his gracious providence, in an *ordinary way.*

God now prefers ordinary methods as opposed to miraculous ones, and Hall explains this by likening it to how angels helped to guide the Israelites though the wilderness, after-which their interaction was much decreased, but did not totally cease. Hall then comments that apparitions are so rare that people doubt them when they happen. ⁵⁸ However, apparitions do truly happen, but some are of demons who *visibly presented themselves, in the glorious form of good angels ... to nurse silly*

⁵⁶ VIII:370

⁵⁷ VIII:371 c.f. II:268-9

⁵⁸ VIII:371

souls in superstition; too many have swallowed the bait, though others have descried the hook. ⁵⁹

Nonetheless, Hall affirms true visible apparitions, especially those defended by eye-witness reports, but admits that one mostly needs a spiritual discernment to see it.

But the trade, that we have with good spirits, *is not now driven by the eye; but is like to themselves, spiritual: yet not so, but that even bodily occasions, we have many times insensible helps from them in such a manner, as that by effects, we can bodily say, Here hath been an angel, though we saw him not.* ⁶⁰

This echoes Taylor, who said that invisible angelic actions have concrete visible consequences. ⁶¹ this invisible help comes in many forms, such as healing. An example of this was a crippled man in Hall's Exeter diocese, whose healing was proved by *the attestation of many hundreds of the neighbours, I took a strict and personal examination, in that my last Visitation which I did and ever shall hold.* Again, Hall asserts the eye-witness reports to attest to the truth of the appearance. This overt intervention, though, is second to more covert activity of angels:

⁵⁹ VIII:372

⁶⁰ VIII:373 (my italics) c.f. II:316

⁶¹ Taylor IV:482

Whence could these things be, but by the *secret aid* of those invisible helpers? It were easy to fill volumes with particulars of these kinds. But the main care and most officious endeavours of these blessed spirits, are employed about the better part, the Soul: in the instilling of good motions; enlightening the understanding; repelling of temptations; furthering our opportunities of good; preventing the occasions of sin; comforting our sorrows; quickening our dullness; encouraging our weakness; and lastly, after all careful attendance here below, conveying the souls of their charge to their glory, and presenting them to the hand of their faithful Creator. ⁶²

This is a comprehensive ministry, yet it is also ministry that is primarily interior to men, and unseen. Unseen, internal ministry is not open to rational examination, yet is confirmed to men by an inner testimony:

(When thinking of angels) in these cases, *we go not by eye-sight*: but we are all well assured (of their ministry). ⁶³

Hall is caught between two stools here; the need to confess the whole counsel of Scripture, and yet respond to accusations that angelic apparitions were irrational and/or false, and so do not happen anymore. Angelic activity is real, but mostly (yet not exclusively) open to either the *spiritual eyes of faith*, or interiorised in men and so unseen.

⁶² VIII:373 (my italics)

Section IX, *The Respects Which We Owe To The Angels*, sharply delineates respect and worship. Men should not worship angels, and Hall attacks mediaeval Catholic practice comparing it with early Church and Gnostic heresy – as did Ussher. Hall starts the section with a defence as to why we should understand our relationship to angels:

The life of angels is political; full of intercourse with themselves and with us. What they return to each other in the course of their Theophanies, is not for us to determine; but since their good offices are thus assiduous to us, *it is meet we do enquire what Duties are requirable from Us to Them.*⁶⁴

Hall recognises that men and angels are inherently in relationship to each other, and men have an active duty towards angels. He rejects Bernard of Clairveaux's assertion that men should *owe to these beneficent spirits reverence for their presence*, but only with the caveat that it was *too liberal* - a practice perhaps too easily misunderstood and thus potentially leading to error – a position which echoes that of Taylor.⁶⁵ Hall is clear that angels do not require men's worship, or prayers, or men using them as mediators,⁶⁶ yet man can pray to God for their protection - as sometimes in Scripture prayers seem to be directed to angels (Gen. 48:19), but they all

⁶³ VIII:374 (my italics)

⁶⁴ VIII:374 (my italics)

⁶⁵ Taylor IV:638; VI:489: See pp.423ff above.

⁶⁶ VIII:374-5

ultimately *terminate that prayer in God, who blessed us by His angel*. Yet Hall warns men not to then go to the other extreme and ignore them:

(If) we come short of our duty to these blessed spirits, if we entertain not in our hearts a high and venerable conceit of their wonderful majesty, glory, and greatness; and an awful acknowledgement and reverential awe of their presence; a holy joy and confident assurance of their care and protection; and last fear to do ought, that might cause them to turn away their faces, in dislike from us. ⁶⁷

Men can lose their angelic protection if they ignore or do not respect angels as they ought to, not just if men sin. What turns angels from men is sin, and men's sin is so awful in their sight that he pleads forgiveness:

Woe is me, what odious scents arise to you perpetually from (sinful men) ... enough to make you abhor the presence and protection of debauched and deplored mortality. ⁶⁸

Yet, if men are aware of the angelic ranks of whom they are in the presence, and act accordingly, it pleases the angels - especially in church when men are always in the presence of angels. Awareness of angels is a vital spiritual exercise. Hall, as with

⁶⁷ VIII:375-6

⁶⁸ VIII:376

Hooker, links men's walk with God with a knowledge of the angels, and he makes this clear in ending Book I of *Invisible World*:

Surely, O ye Invisible Guardians, it is not my sense that shall make the difference: it shall be my desire to be no less careful of displeasing you, than if I saw you present by me, clothed in flesh; neither shall I rest less assured of your graciousness and tuition, and the expectation of spiritual offices from you which may tend towards the blessedness, than I am now sensible of the animation of my own soul.⁶⁹

It is almost as if Hall is saying *As I live and breathe, I shall be reverently aware of the angelic presence* – angels, for Hall, are not something that can be confessed for the sake of orthodoxy and then ignored. As with Hooker, to fully understand the universe we live in, and how God operates within it, one must have a grasp of the angelic realm and rôle.

Little of Book II (On Man's Soul) is of interest, but part of Book III on demons does provide some information, and it is here Hall shows a real difference of approach to the Westminster Confession. The central issue is that while the Confession posited a clear double predestination model for angels that paralleled what they envisaged for men, Hall, while being a double-predestinarian for men, pointedly makes no attempt to extend that into his angelology.

To begin with, in Section I, Hall looks at the Angelic Fall, and says that the fallen angels are forever fallen, with no way back. He also says that as it is with spiritual eyes that men see the good angels, it is only by them that one knows the reality of the demons, since it is *the same power that clears and strengthens the eyes of our soul to see those over-excelling glories of the good angels, can also enable us to pierce through that hellish obscurity.*⁷⁰ Hall now introduces the Angelic Creation, saying that all angels were initially created good, and suggesting they came under the designation of light. However, if God is good and all-powerful, how could evil spring from His creation of light? Hall rejects any dualist ideas that see evil angels created by God, or that anything in creation could have driven them to sin, but knows that *this curiosity must receive an answer*, and proceeds to explain the Angelic Fall.

God created angels *his noblest creature in the nearest likeness to himself, and therefore to endue him with perfection of understanding and freedom of will: either of which being wanting, there could have been no excellency in that which was intended for the best.*⁷¹ Therefore, there was nothing faulty about their creation that could have led to the fall. As with Hooker, Hall sees angels created in perfection, and with *the power of their own inclinations (which) swayed them awry from that highest end, which they should have solely aimed at unto oblique ends of their own.* Using the model found in Origen and Pseudo-Dionysius, and also in Hooker (and which is thus not Calvinist in content or direction), it appears

⁶⁹ VIII:376-7

⁷⁰ VIII:395

that angels did not aim towards their God-given end (goal) in the way that God intended, but looked towards an end of their own by their own means. Thus, for Hall, the angelic sin was a rejection of their inherent purpose and goal:

Hence was the beginning of sin: for, as it falls out in causes efficient, that when the secondary agent swerves from the order and direction of the principal, straightways a fault thereupon ensues: ... when the secondary end is not kept in, under the order of the principal and highest end, there grows a sin of the will, whose object is ever good. But, if a supposed and self-respective good be suffered to take the will for the best and absolute good, the will proves instantly vicious.⁷²

The secondary will (angelic), and secondary end (the angelic role) did not move in conformity with the primary will (that of God) and end (to become as like to God as possible). Hall, though, does not see this as an intentionally evil move (since its object was good), but a move intended for good that ended in evil. Any rejection of the perfect will of God for one's personal will is sin – even if the intention was good. This, Hall posits, is an unavoidable problem when you give creatures freewill - they will chose their own decisions over those of God, and angels are no different. By this, it seems that Hall avoids the conundrum of why angels fell if there was nothing evil in creation to drive them towards evil, since their fall was rooted in a well-meant but wrong choice – a choice that led to disastrous consequences. Hall thus rejects a

⁷¹ VIII:396

⁷² VIII:396

double-predestinarian model for angels, probably as it would situate the root of evil (the creation by non-election of Satan) in God. The remaining angels are only sinless because of *God's special confirmation (without which can) only happen a sin of the will.*

Therefore the angelic fall was that *they did not order their own particular supposed good to the supreme and utmost end; but suffered to dwell in an end of their own, and by this means put themselves in the place of God.*⁷³

Angels fell because they chose their own destiny, rather than accepting the rôle assigned to them, by God, but Hall rejects the idea that angels deliberately intended to usurp God's position:

Not that their ambition went so high as to aspire to a height of goodness or greatness equal to their Infinite Creator.⁷⁴

Angels could not have been motivated by evil purposes, since this would indicate dualism, or a faulty creation. However, it is *neither needful, nor possible to know* the exact reasons for their fall⁷⁵ - the fact that angels fell is sufficient. However, Hall now has a problem, since if the sin of the angels wasn't a rejection of God per se, simply them wanting to do His will their own way, why have demons become so evil? Hall answers this by returning to the idea of a hierarchical universe, where creatures ascend or descend the hierarchy with the aim of becoming as like God as possible.

⁷³ VIII:396-7

⁷⁴ VIII:397

When angels were created, there were no other beings. Thus, when they fell, there was no lower being in the hierarchy that they could become, and so they had to, in effect, lose their entire nature. Hall puts it like this:

(Angels) could not fall into any intelligent nature, since it were no other, than to affect his own non-being; for as much there can be no being at all, without distinction of degrees, and subordination of being.

What Hall seems to mean is that there was no hierarchy, and so angels had nowhere to fall to except into non-being. He continues, using a picture drawn from Augustine, to illustrate this:

This was, I suppose, the threshold of leaving their first estate. Now it was with angelical spirits, as it is with heavy bodies: when they began to fall, they went down at once; speedily passing through many degrees of wickedness. ... We know too well by ourselves, that even the will of man, when it is once let loose to sin, finds no stay; how much more of those active spirits, which, by reason of their simple and spiritual nature, convert themselves wholly into what they incline! ⁷⁶

Thus, when men fell God had already created the rest of the world and the animals, so they only fell a little way down the hierarchy of being, perhaps closer to the animal

⁷⁵ VIII:397

⁷⁶ VIII:367 c.f. Aug: De Trin. III:4

realm. Yet when angels fell there was no lower place to fall to. They literally plummeted out of being, and so beyond redemption, since there was no hierarchy to stop the drop, and once outside their being there was nothing to restrain them. Although, talking of men, when discussing Hall's exposition of Matthew 12:43-5, Kinloch says that Hall takes the position that *Nature abhors a vacuum*.⁷⁷ It seems to be that sin was such a contradiction of the angelic nature that it could do nothing but create a vacuum. If an angel wants to act without God, then can do nothing but act against God – throwing them into an unassailable condition and position. In addition to this, Hall appears to positing a strong free will model for angels. He is suggesting that when angels choose a course of action, they fully and perfectly follow it (*convert themselves into what they incline*), which means that if they choose to act without God then this will become their whole method of existence, and this can do nothing but lead to a fullness of fallenness and sin. From here, Hall discusses demons and their evil ministry.

What is of note is that through the whole exposition of Books I-III, the role of God using angels to enact His judgement is mentioned, but not underlined. However, elsewhere Hall, when talking of the angels delivering judgement upon the earth in Revelation 13, writes that Christ sent them, so that Christ could be seen *to oppose those wicked heresies which had been broached in the Eastern Churches*.⁷⁸ Effectively, good angels are responsible for Christological and other heresies which drove the Church to define the orthodox credal view of Christ and then for the rise of

⁷⁷ Kinloch p.51

⁷⁸ IV:562

Islam, which both crushed the Eastern Church, and is also underpinned by an erroneous view of Christ. The first angel was responsible for *the heresies of Arius, Macedonius, Eunomius, Photinus, Luciferians, Messalians, Apolinarius, Priscillianus, Pelagius, Nestorius, Eutyches*. The second for that *large and numerous Council which was met at Ariminum, for the establishing of the Arian heresy*. The third mislead Mohammed who *fell away and devised with Sergius the Nestorian Monk and John of Antioch the Arian, to frame his cursed Alcoran (which led to) some dangerous errors and superstitions which began to prevail in the (Church)*.⁷⁹ This attack on Islam is the driving force behind the work of the following angels - the fourth allowing the Muslim invasions of Christian lands, and the fifth giving Islam more power to mislead Christians and granting the Saracan horde victory in the Holy Land. The sixth merely continued the process with ever-greater severity.⁸⁰

Conclusion.

Hall's angelology is strong and full, and also very distinctive. As a Calvinist one would expect an approach, if not of Perkins, then perhaps of Sibbes. However, for Hall, angels are part of devotional practice, and true Christian life is consciously all-pervaded by them. They must not be ignored, since paralleling Hooker, they, with men, make up one part of the whole integrated cosmology of God's creation.

⁷⁹ IV:563

⁸⁰ IV:563ff

Three things stand out in Hall's angelology. First, regarding issues around *Reason*, he has to justify the existence of angels. While Hall clearly wants to uphold the authority and truth of the Bible, he realises that angels are difficult to defend using reason alone. He regularly affirms their activity, but then says you need to have the regenerated eyes of faith to truly observe them and their action, and even then much of what they do is hidden and interior to men. One senses that angels are starting to fall into the category of faith, not reason, but Hall insists that angels are true and self evident. However, one needs a level of proof and demonstration to justify this, and this he tries to do by, not only labouring the point that he has eye-witness accounts of apparitions, but also the central point that angels are demonstrated by the causes they effect in the world.

Second is regarding his *Calvinism*, and how he was not in the line of people such as Perkins or Sibbes. For example in his use of sources, he shows influence from Aquinas, the Cappadocian Fathers and other Patristic and Mediaeval writers - Gerson being a prime example. On top of this, his position that an awareness of, and reverence for, angels are part of true Christian practice, would have found little sympathy with many Calvinists. Finally, the clear absence of any double predestinarian model for angels is very noticeable especially when considering the close proximity of the Westminster Confession.

Third was his view of the angelic fall, and his refusal to attribute evil to the angels, seeing their fall as the result of an erroneous, but not deliberately evil, free will based choice. This, as well as the literal falling out of being by the demons which led them

to be so evil, even when the sin was not of great proportions, and the idea that angels give themselves fully to whatever course of action they take (thus one disobedient and erroneous choice must needs lead to total evil and falleness), sets him well apart from the Calvinism of Westminster Confession, and ensures a uniqueness to his angelology.

CONCLUSION

In 1660 Charles II regained the throne for the Stuarts, and a new era began. With the formation of the Royal Society, and the promotion of new thinking in general, the mediaeval view of the universe was being quickly eroded and replaced with a conception more in tune with the rationalism of the day. Alongside this, in 1662, there was a new Prayer Book (whose angelology was the same as that of the 1552 and 1559 Prayer Books), and the subsequent enforced conformity brought the Great Ejection that led to a reshaped Church of England. The rise of Deism and anti-Trinitarian belief systems added yet another side to the debates over how the Church of England should be formed and run. By the 1660s, the world and cosmology of Hooker was being left behind, and even though Jeremy Taylor was still standing on that rock, fewer and fewer others were there with him.

So what can we make of Anglican Angelology in the period 1547-1662? A number of facets are clearly obvious, and other less so.

- Changes in attitude and approach to angelology mirrored the changes and moves in the wider theological and philosophical milieu. The initial reformed positivity of Luther gave way to a far more sparse and cautious (negative, even) Calvinist angelology, which was then challenged by the Patristic anti-Calvinists, who, as their thought developed and grew in confidence, moved into areas which Calvinism would never have countenanced. Rationalism then added a whole new angle to discussions, and brought a new need for definition and defence of angels' very existence, never mind their ministry.

- The continental influence was very strong in certain areas. The Lutheran influence was short lived, and Calvinism held sway for much of the period – even when the Laudian Church was in the ascendancy. This meant that throughout the period, despite the rise of the anti-Calvinists, there was always a general reluctance, rooted in a suspicion of Catholicism, to advocate a developed angelology without caution, and any angelology that was developed was always presented in anti-Catholic terms to ensure that the line was never blurred.
- Nevertheless, those who moved away from continental Calvinism were ever more open to discussing the role of angels, and this, along with a growing interest in the Patristic and mediaeval heritage of the Church, meant that, while nobody ever returned to a full-blown mediaeval Catholic theology of a cultus joined to a Dionysian system of mediation and hierarchy, a redefinition of the theological lines was clearly made. For example, during the Elizabethan period no-one would have discussed the creation, knowledge, organisation or ministry of angels. However, during the Golden Age there seems to have been an acceptance that the central Protestant ethos of an anti-papal and non-mediated faith was not compromised by admitting, for example, that angels were created as part of light, or by discussing the range of angelic knowledge, or by accepting the active and efficacious ministry of angels towards the Church. Again, one could be still a true Protestant, and admit the possibility of Guardian Angels, and that they intercede for their charge.

- Periods of national safety and security seemed to encourage people to think beyond polemic and on to other areas. Classically, between the Armada (1588), and the problems caused by Laud from the 1630s onward, the Golden Age flourished.
- The influence of James I (and the Crown in general) is tantalisingly difficult to pin-down, but the fact that during the Stuart reign, most of those who had developed angelologies were close to the King (Salkeld, Andrewes, Donne, Sibbes, Cosin, and latterly Hall), is notable.
- The relationship between soteriology, ecclesiology and angelology is fascinating. There is a clear connection from one to the other (although not always followed, as in the case of Arminius) but the link is there. From a Calvinist point of view, salvation as an elective act of God where a Christian receives the one's saving grace in His elective act. This means that the church is simply a place where one proclaims what one has already received, and is not a place for adding to one's salvation by other means of grace except by Word and Sacrament. While technically this does not strictly mean that that angels cannot add something to one's life, salvation or walk with God, it is strictly minimised. In contrast, a soteriology where a stronger progressive sanctification model is used, theology is opened up for grace to be given in ways other than simple election, Word and Sacrament – for example, through the ministry of angels.
- At this early stage of the enlightenment, angels are still part of cosmology, but whereas Herbert saw them as part of a universal religion, Hobbes had, through taking his Calvinism to its absolute and logical extreme, removed all need for angels to exist

and shaped his Biblical expositions to reflect that. The fact that he ultimately confessed their existence was not due to seeing a need for them in his system, just that he felt that Christ's words could not be challenged on the point.

Angelology is an area of both Anglican and Protestant theology and history that has been much neglected over the last 450 years – the paucity of material on it, being a clear indication of this. As a truly un-furrowed and undiscovered subject, once one begins to dig, other issues of interest arise that could lead to further discussion. It is therefore not surprising that a number of issues have been highlighted by this thesis that could be further investigated:

- The relationship between soteriology, ecclesiology and angelology is an obvious and powerful subtext to this thesis, but a far more systematic evaluation of it would be a interesting piece of research to do.
- The exact influence of James I in the theology and thought of the Stuart church and life is difficult to clearly ascertain and define, but it is nevertheless there.
- Again, the absence of information on the life, thought and career of James Salkeld, besides *An Treatise* leaves many questions unanswered. Similarly, there is no systematic evaluation of William Forbes' thought, and more importantly of his *Considerationaes*, where the range of sources and methodology and theology used is so out of step with many of his contemporaries that one wonders how he developed it, and then managed to get promoted through the Church.

- The relationship between Lancelot Andrewes' soteriology, sacramental theology, his idea of theosis, and the concept of men becoming ἱσαγγελοι is again tantalisingly difficult to define, but well worth further investigation.
- Again, how this flow of thought in the Church of England is mirrored (or not) by those outside the church, both in England and on the continent. For example, Thomas Goodwin's exposition on angels in the light of a Calvinist predestinarian theology, could only be written once he had left the Church. Similarly, Henry Lawrence's angelology which balances both Patristic issues such as Guardian Angels, with a strict double predestinarian model was written as an independent outside the Church. Again, poetry and literature (Edmund Spenser, Thomas Heywood, John Donne, George Herbert and John Milton, to name but a few) is a mine of information that fell outside the remit of this thesis.
- Finally is to expound the on-going subtext to the thesis, of the relationship between the Bible, tradition and speculation, and a developed angelology. Is it legitimate to move beyond the plain teaching of Scripture? If so, on what basis, using what information, guides and controls, and how far can one go before legitimate speculation becomes non-legitimate? It would be interesting to look at this explicitly in terms of how more modern theologies and angelologies have balanced the Bible, speculation and tradition.

This is a subject ripe for additional research and investigation, and one which hopefully will be further developed and expanded upon in the future.



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